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OLUPHI;

A Tragedy.

By George Bowen.



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OLUPH;  
A Tragedy.

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OLUPH, } *Princes of Norway.*  
HAKON, }  
SIGURD, *Earl of Drontheim.*  
GUDRUDE, ADELSTEIN, ROLFF, *his Sons.*  
GULDHARALD.  
EINSTEIN.  
SWENO, *his Son.*  
THORLEIF, }  
ALSTEIN, } *Nobles.*  
ALP, }  
METZALONG.  
THORSTEIN.

ASGILDA, *Queen of Norway, Mother of Hakon.*  
ALSIFA, *Daughter of Sigurd.*

*Skalds, Nobles, People, Retainers, Guards, Huntsmen, &c. •*

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The Scenes, with one exception, are in Nidaros, the ancient  
capitol of Norway, and seat of the Earls of Drontheim.

The Scene excepted, is laid upon an island not distant.  
Time—the tenth century.



## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before the palace gates; on one side an altar.—  
Sunrise.*

*Enter SIGURD and ROLFF.*

*Sigurd.* My son, go seek and hither bring lord Alp,  
That I may know if tidings from the prince  
—If any, what—have reached his father's halls.

*Rolff.* No need, for I behold him bent this way.

*Enter ALP.*

*Alp.* Rolff and Earl Sigurd, welcome to these gates  
And to our silent chambers, where no glee  
Visits, forgetful of the king and heir,  
Both absent.

*Sigurd.* Thanks; and from your warrior-prince  
What news?

*Alp.* Nor message yet nor rumor give  
Intelligence, and their delay bodes well;  
For on this interval, whose ev'ry day-break  
Has found us unenliven'd by advice  
From Oluph's force, assurance we may base  
Of his success.

*Rolff.* Make this appear, Lord Alp.

*Alp.* This is my reasoning.—If he would drive  
Invaders from the realm, his pow'r must march  
E'en to the kingdom's confines. For this end,  
Time must loan freely. If his battles meet  
The frown of fortune, with the haste of wind  
The army had rushed homeward.

*Rolff.* Rightly urged.

*Sigurd.* I deem not Oluph capable to win  
In strife with Erick, and much blame the king

Whose fondness spurning counsel, gave his son  
 Captaincy o'er this enterprise.

*Rolf.* Not fondness;  
 For disagreement stood 'twixt sire and prince  
 Ere his departure.

*Alp.* Which affords us well  
 An insight to the noble frame of both.  
 When this despoiler marched upon the realm,  
 Our king his coldness gave unto the winds,  
 And placed in Oluph's hands the chance of war;  
 Who, with like tossing of his first resentment,  
 Went gladden'd to the post.

*Sigurd.* I fear th' event.  
 That band which Erick leads, is culled from isles  
 Which yield the bravest natures: He himself  
 Has grown on fortune's play-ground, and will wrestle  
 With any task of life while life is his,  
 Till on dominion's couch he may repose.  
 Trust me, th' enthusiasm which prompts assault,  
 Has some such power and hidden as the aid  
 That guardian angels lend; which not the stern  
 And stubborn fortitude of those assailed  
 Can easily stem. We must stand furnished, Alp,  
 In our best armor; ere our soldiery,  
 The foe may be among us.

*Alp.* No, my lord,  
 Not likely such result; held not the king  
 So firm conviction of his son's good speed,  
 That he went forth to meet him, well assured  
 To meet him victor?

*Sigurd.* Wiser king, had he  
 Succors provided and more justly welcome  
 With a befriending pow'r.—Where is Prince Hakon?

*Alp.* Within the palace. Will you enter?

*Sigurd.* No;  
 The morning air is grateful.

*Enter HAKON.*

*Hakon.* Earl of Drontheim,  
 To see you here is pleasure.

A TRAGEDY.

*Sigurd.* And the queen,  
How fares she?

*Hakon.* Unreposing and disquiet  
She awaits tidings; dark forebodings dwell  
In all her contemplation.

*Sigurd.* She, mayhap,  
Anticipates defeat.

*Hakon.* Beyond this; something  
I know not to interpret;

*Alp.* 'Tis not strange.  
This disposition often steals into us  
Born of too weening a solicitude.

*Rolf.* Prince, you are one who does not fear defeat.

*Hakon.* Oluph's deservings were but poor and slight,  
Could he not beat this band of pirates hence,  
Unleagued and individual outlaws, ta'en  
By one and one from desert rocks and wilds  
And far-off solitudes; their noblest spur  
The craving of the moment. Tell me not  
That glory is in vanquishing the like.

*Sigurd.* Hakon is wrong,—for resolution, strength,  
True valor do distinguish those whom he  
Disprizes thus.—Be chidden in your thought,  
And better judge these war-bred sons of nature.

*Alp.* What soldier comes? 'Tis Sweno, son of Einstein.

*Sigurd.* None braver live.

*Enter SWENO.*

What bring you from the army?

*Sweno.* The best of news. We met the foe at Insla;  
Fierce strife and dreadful slaughter all that field  
Govern'd from morn till night. They fled at sundown;  
We followed, faster as they faster fled,  
E'en to the ocean, where upon their ships  
The fugitives escaped us with such glory  
As loss of half their numbers might bestow.

*Sigurd.* Thanks for such news. Thus Oluph has achieved  
Noble success.

*Hakon.* Did I not prophesy  
Victory won with ease.

*Sweno.* Nor weak, my lord,

OLUPH;

Nor valorless, were those whom Erick headed.  
From dawn till dusk they struggled, and those arms  
That overthrew were worthy of high praise.

*Alp.* Tell me how Oluph bore him.

*Sweno.*

Say, Earl Sigurd,

Is my approval or censure to be taken?  
Have I experience in the things of war?

*Sigurd.* I know not him who nears my judgment more  
Of a skill'd warrior, brave at once and wise,  
Than Sweno thou.

*Sweno.*

Be then my words believed

When I extol Prince Oluph's generalship.  
He moved amid the strife, as though his years  
Had all been practised there; as if to him  
All places else were foreign, there his home.  
The oldest chieftains paused, wond'ring to view  
His wideness of direction, how he filled  
Each soul with val'rous ardor, still his own  
Tempering with discretion, and how gave  
No cease to excitation, but pursued  
Close on defeat the foe. These 'twill rejoice  
His father well to know.

*Hakon.*

Met you the king?

*Sweno.* How! met?

*Hakon.*

Have you not seen him?

*Sweno.*

Went he hence?

*Hakon.* Ay, to encounter Oluph in return.

*Sweno.* Who can explain?

*Sigurd.*

Why, Sweno, this amazement?

*Sweno.* Befriend me, Heaven, as I saw not the king,  
Nor is he with his son. Since when—?

*Hakon.*

Three days.

*Sweno.* Three hours it is not since I left the prince  
Hastening hither to be gladdened in  
His parent's commendation.

*Hakon.*

'T is indeed

Exceeding strange.

*Sigurd.*

What retinue along

Did the king take?

*Hakon.*

Einsteint thy father only,

From whom he is ne'er sundered.—Came there none

To notify the prince hereof?

*Sveno.* One came ;  
But when the sire not follow'd, the intent  
We deemed abandon'd.

*Hakon.* 'Tis alarming news.  
To Insla hence, the way is one and plain.

*Sveno.* We kept due course thereon.—My father with him!  
Protect his honorable years, ye gods.

*Enter METZALONG.*

*Metz.* Know that the prince has come.

*Alp.* Ha! say'st thou!

*Metz.* Ay,

Within the palace now. Through the north gate  
He hastily spurr'd his steed.

*Hakon.* Spake ye with him?

*Metz.* Prince, no. [[*Exit HAKON.*

*Sigurd.* Rolff, we must learn what Oluph knows,  
If aught his sire concerning.

*Rolff.* I do fear

The threatening of these tidings.

*Alp.* I will follow;

Doubtless a council will be summon'd straight.

*Sveno.* Little I weened this sun should be so soon  
By menaced fortunes shadow'd. We must see.

*[Exeunt in the palace.]*

*Enter EINSTEIN with TWO bearing a corse.*

*Einstein.* Tread lightly, friends; your hallow'd burden heave  
Gently upon this altar.—All is well.

Your dues to me are many and have bound you  
Forever to my bidding.

*1st.* We confess.

*Einstein.* If on this altar to high Thor you swear  
To let the memory of this saddest labor  
Be perished and entombed, to rule your thoughts  
That they not dwell upon it, and your tongues  
That they not utter of it,—all those ties  
Which hinder ye of freedom I now break,  
And your control give from me.

*Both.* We do swear.

*Einstein.* Fidelity's foul breach teems with disaster;  
Beware then.—Go your ways in peace and silence.

— Ye rulers!

[*Exeunt TWO.*

Whose will is mandate unavoidable,  
If supplications influence your future,  
Hear me a suppliant: Let this crime be hushed  
In its own bosom, stifled and entombed  
From thirsting ignorance, and searchful man  
Be baffled till he yield to mystery  
This terrible misdeed, inscrutable  
To rest forever; else th' unshielded horror  
Will offspring horrors wreak, and more befall  
More woful than befallen hath this time.—  
Now to this royal pile I bid farewell;  
And sorrowfully fly, that peace may dwell  
Among the sons of men.

[*Exit.*

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SCENE II.—*Hall in the palace.*

ALSTEIN THORLEIF—*Enter to them ALP.*

*Alp.* Good morrow, lords; who saw the prince?

*Alstein.*

No one,

Lord Alp; but we attend his coming forth  
Immediate. What of this enigma think you?  
How Oluph missed the king nor he return,  
Is strange and 'wilders reason.

*Alp.*

Though unapt

Occurrency's dark side to view, yet fears  
Of evil accident sway in me now.

*Thorleif.* Time will enlight; in its back ground we see  
Much that the front and presence showed us not.

*Enter SWENO.*

*Sweno.* The prince now sends swift servants far and wide  
To seek his father. When these news did meet him,  
He shrunk in sorrow, but obeyed forthwith  
His wiser impulse, and accepting hope,  
Set remedy afoot. Lo! he approaches.

*Enter OLUPH.*

*Alstein.* Welcome among us, prince. From me receive



What honor my delighted heart can render  
For your deserved successes.

*Alp.* If, my lord,  
Our breath should scant in uttering what our sense  
Does teem withal, thanks and poor-glorying praise,  
Answer our fears which your return creates  
Of the king's fate. Can you not, prince, convey  
Some clue to this wo-boding mystery.

*Oluph.* I am not able to unfold that cause  
Which now compels to serious alarm  
The functions of our minds. I how<sup>er</sup>ward came  
Tranquil, undoubting, in the quiet trust,  
To greet a gladden'd sire; but in his stead  
Inexplicable absence mocks my haste,  
And startles apprehension. When from ye  
I seek some light and glimmer of relief,  
But echoed question makes the vain reply.  
Must we then sit and wonder? and expect  
Caprice of fortune to unveil this matter?

*Thorleif.* Save rigid the research you have commanded,  
We can devise no counsel at this hour.

*Enter SIGURD.*

*Sigurd.* Th' anxieties which spring with your return  
Take from its lustre, and in place of gladness,  
Fill up the heart with gloom.

*Oluph.* Let us not fear  
So harshly, nor so sorrowfully build  
On these scarce urgent reasons. Time may give  
To smile at this our consternation.

*Thorleif.* Prince,  
Your parent hearkened to my voice in counsel  
For two score winters.

*Oluph.* Let me ne'er forget  
Th' example of my sire, whom may the gods  
Preserve from peril! Thorleif, speak your thought.

*Thorleif.* Direction is the heart and head of welfare:  
Kingdoms do suffer in the loss of kings,  
Suffer enough, but havoc wastes the realm  
A stranger to immediate succession.  
Therefore, with wisdom and the certain joy,

O prince, of all, mount the deserted throne,  
Lest further visitings of harm ensue  
This most unwelcome.

*Sigurd.* Thorleif! Prince! By Odin,  
I cannot stay my wrath. Shall we give scope  
To such ill-timed counsel? Ha, my lord?

*Oluph.* Continue, Thorleif.

*Thorleif.* Who shall dare uphold  
The fitness of a by-laid crown, a throne  
Whose emptiness is laughter to our looks,  
Derision? And is Erick's enmity  
No peril? This discomfit will but fan  
The vigor of his hatred, and like power,  
In bird or beast o'er helpless beast or bird,  
He will descend the seas to our dismay,  
If Norway hath no sov'reign.

*Sweno.* Thorleif, no;  
You saw not his defeat.

*Sigurd.* Denounce, O prince,  
Advice so rude, unhallowed: it demands  
The wrath of every loyal-featur'd man.

*Alstein.* Methinks, good Earl of Drontheim, that your zeal  
Outstrips the need, and boisterously decries  
Lawful and fitting speech. I deem it I,  
Meet that Prince Oluph ask the people's voice,  
And so assume the sceptre.

*Sigurd.* Show the fate  
To have o'ertaken our last cherished king;  
Give for the face  
Of Darkness, face of melancholy Truth;  
Then may the sov'reignty, with sorrowing heart,  
Engirt thy head. But, if before that hour  
Escape, O prince, and ye supports, beware  
The after scan and comment of the world.  
Ay, nobles look your frowns; they shake not me,  
Encouraged though they are; firm I am fixed,  
And will not falter to cry out against  
This rash detested haste.

*Oluph.* Most noble earl,  
By those all-reverenced gods, from whom we prosper,  
For the dear'st welfare of a life, the crown

Would I not grasp, till solemn surety is,  
 And is no more this conflict of our minds.  
 Now, Sigurd, let me claim thee for my guide  
 And good adviser; set thee up in love,  
 To sway me by the index of thy judgment.  
 The benefit of that mind which speaks itself  
 Unlipped, unhiding, hardy as our airs,  
 And self-relying as the storm-warred rock,  
 I earnestly entreat.

*Sigurd.* I know no words  
 To utter the reciprocal heart-feeling  
 You call up in me. Henceforth name the task;  
 My utmost pow'r shall go toward fulfilment.

*Enter HAKON.*

*Hakon.* Murdered! base, basely murdered!

*Oluph.* Hakon, Hakon!  
 The king?

*Hakon.* Ev'n he.

*Oluph.* Dead?

*Hakon.* Wounded here and there,  
 Bloodily gashed, upon Thor's altar laid,  
 Mine eyes his corse beheld.

*Oluph.* Father of men! whose deed was this?—What more?

*Hakon.* Nothing whereon the hunger of suspicion  
 Could hope to prey stood near.

*Oluph.* O gods! why this? [*Exit OLUPH.*]

*Sigurd.* But who conveyed? Were they not seen of man?

*Hakon.* Unseen. O misery!

*Others.* Our king's no more.

*Hakon.* Perished! and where is retribution. Mother,  
 Bereaved lady, can'st thou bear this sorrow?

*Sigurd.* All is bewilderment. The suddenness,  
 The mystery, the crime contend in strangeness,  
 Which shall loom most in wonder.

*Alp.* Awful deed  
 That cries alarm to future.

*Sveno.* Fell assassin!  
 That I but knew thy refuge! Not though nature,  
 And strength surpassing nature's, shielded thee  
 Would vengeance be unsought.

*Hakon.* Assassin!—Who?  
 Who not! We stand as fools, as those o'erwhelmed  
 By supernatural apparition, while  
 Th' abhorred injurer may stalk around.

*Alp.* Can you think so?

*Hakon.* Doth not this deed ingulf  
 All strangeness, all impossibilities?  
 Behooves us then, who bore my father love,  
 To tread the times with heedful steps yet fearless.  
 Pledge then th' undrooping effort of your arm,  
 The fearless voice and soul high-strung to purpose,  
 This murderer unholy forth to hale  
 From his thick shroud to the all-seeing day.

*Thorleif, Alstein.* This do we.

*Hakon.* And if mighty in his state  
 We find him, let no cowardly respect  
 Of fear, neither the finer ties of kindred,  
 Stand up in hinderance of what revenge  
 Lies in the power of manhood. To the queen  
 My feeble help I now must minister  
 Against this sorrow. But my soul is fraught  
 With its own cloud, and wants serenity  
 To banish that of others.

*Sveno.* I will seek  
 That which hath erst been home and continent  
 Of a most heav'n-perfected spirit.

*Alp.* We  
 Unto the corse will follow the good Sveno.

[*Exeunt save SIGURD.*

*Sigurd.* My mind misdoubts this Hakon. 'Tis in highness  
 To hate those higher, and but nature's leaven  
 To envy those whom nature has bestowed  
 Beyond us.—Only I'm assured of this;  
 That the most kingly graces of the sire  
 Have 'lighted on Princee Oluph.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Seat of the Earls of Drontheim.**Enter SIGURD and GULDHARALD.*

*Sigurd.* What scope requires you now to touch anew  
Those deeds of by-gone times? Do I forget  
The rendered service? Or am I condemned  
For penury of gratitude?

*Guldharald.* That harm  
Was hinder'd when I slew the boar I know not;  
You said I saved your life, so the spectators.  
If merit there was in 't, your high rewards  
Werc overpayment: from the wand'ers life  
You lifted me to honors, wealth and love,  
The equal of your sons.

*Sigurd.* These are but scouts  
That runs before petition. Be sincere;  
Save those befriended by the natural ties,  
Ability shall not more stoop to any  
Than ye; thy wish shall win itself.

*Guldharald.* My lord,  
So wildly on the billows of this world  
My earlier life was tost, that I may seem  
Benumbed and brazen to a due respect.  
If then in some entreaty which I make  
Boldness outshine propriety, let these  
Speak largely in excuse.

*Sigurd.* Why do ye pause?  
Am not I coated and secured against  
All words and manners that way-lay the wish  
They'd wait upon? Whate'er I will, I will,—  
Nor man in mass can bend me; what encounters  
My well approved course, no oratory  
And no remembrance of a debt can sway  
This mind to sanction. Speak; I can do much  
If what you seek is well; nothing, if ill.

*Guldharald.* Well, well; I trust in your consent, not merely  
That I am ever hopeful, but the rather  
That even my beseeching is a gift.  
It gives the affirmation of a heart  
Bounden to you and yours. I love your daughter.

*Sigurd.* —Is she not fair?

*Gulldharald.* More lovely than a form  
 By a god bestowed from all the beautiful  
 That dwell with earth.—Give me, O Heav'ns, a heart  
 To answer not beneficence with aught  
 That nears presumption!—If I err, my lord,  
 Two motives of mine error plead beside me;  
 Our long existence under the one roof,  
 By the same outspread feasting morn and night,  
 Perusing still her all-where gliding eye,  
 Is one and weighty cause. Be then the other,  
 She is your daughter and your heart's fond home;  
 Where I am grateful, there my sympathies  
 Must be companion.

*Sigurd.* . . . And has Alsifa

Given response, and therewith warranty?

*Gulldharald.* No word of hers hath pictured me the heart;—

*Sigurd.* Ho, there! My daughter ask to move this way.

*Gulldharald.* But airy indirections faint and few  
 Tell to the cyc-bound gazer more than speech.

*Enter ALSIFA.*

*Sigurd.* Approach, my daughter; with sincerity,  
 (How can'st thou else?) make answer to my words.  
 I would know from thee where affection fixes  
 Most fondly; who the object of this fancy  
 And strong regard of thine conspicuous?

*Alsifa.* The destination of my ceaseless love  
 Is worthy of a richer tribute far.  
 Is it not thee? Thou art indeed the home  
 Of my devotion, and my fount of thought,  
 Happy in service, gushes e'er for thee.

*Sigurd.* Nay, I doubt not thou liberally meet'st  
 Thy father's fondness. But the filial love  
 Not alone nestles in the maiden's heart.  
 Affection rolls a tide more deep than this,  
 Whose attributes elude the tongue's expression  
 So they impalpable, invisible,  
 Ennobling are. Say, Alsifa, for whom,  
 Directly, briefly, say for whom thou own'st  
 This feeling I design?

*Gulldharald.* . . . Let not thy lips,

Lady, be truant to the word within.

*Sigurd.* Speak, daughter, and divulge the under thought  
Of all thy meditation.

*Alsifa.* Pardon me.  
Pray you prefer some solitary time,  
When no unneeded car leadens the tongue  
To make confused report.

[*Going.*]

*Sigurd.* Go not hence, child.  
Obey me as I'm aught to ye; at once.—

*Alsifa.* You know not, father—O 'tis hard!—my secret  
Which should be whisper'd at the twilight hour,  
When silence favors and some spot congenial,  
Such sudden rude discov'ry would afflict  
With a most lasting wound. Kindly conceive  
That I have motives for withholding it,  
Which known, would win you from solicitation.

*Sigurd.* By Heav'n! I 'gin mistrust. E'en as you hope,  
Mine own best-loved to exist henceforth,  
Answer nor anger me with fresh delay.

*Gulldharald.* It grieves me, lady, that my many winters  
Beneath this roof-tree passed, and every sun  
The commerce of discourse betwixt us current,  
Have nothing worn thy candor's fixed restraint.

*Alsifa.* Time was, Prince Oluph often made repair  
Long ling'ring to your castle. Whether me  
The unbent dignity demarking choice  
And aspiration won; or whe'er his nature  
Clothed in such qualities as pluck th' affection  
From out th' opposed heart, did rivet me,  
I know not well; but—if 'tis shame to speak,  
Bare ye who bade me, the chief blame thereof—  
Full truly I avouch—

*Sigurd.* Enough, go in.

*Alsifa.* Unjust, my lord, your indignation is. [*Exit ALSIFA.*]

*Sigurd.* Presumptuous boy!

*Gulldharald.* By Heaven! I am gone.

*Sigurd.* Nobly-ambitious youth!

*Gulldharald.* How! do you taunt?

*Sigurd.* My bitter scorn and censure be upon thee.  
What! did I shelter thee such time for this?

—Hearken; you did me once a benefit;

This hinders that I turn you beggarly  
 To play again with fortune. Therefore rest,  
 Vain and aspiring boy, and be my mirth  
 And pleasantry in days of feast and revel. [Exit SIGURD.]

*Gulldharald.* To go? No, by the gods! Here I remain,  
 Here will I plant myself so fixedly,  
 So strongly, that with time—O cursed shame!  
 To be their ridicule?—Yes time will come  
 That he shall sorrow for the insolence,  
 And be downcast before me. O this hour!  
 Yet will I boldly build on this disgrace;  
 Will wreak his downfall and will win the maiden.  
 I have the scheme revolving, which when wrought,  
 Will lift me o'er the the seorner. Mirth for feast-days!  
[Exit GULDHARALD.]

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SCENE IV.—*Chambers of the Queen.*

ASGILDA, HAKON.

*Asgilda.* Unconscious have I wreaked some crime, O Thor,  
 Deemed worthy of calamity so dire  
 And long-enduring? Spare no more your wrath,  
 For sorrow is extreme, and further harm  
 Can not befall. Spouseless? O Hakon!—How!  
 Smil'st thou?

*Hakon.* And justly. Why your loftier nature  
 With mockery of lament will you belie?  
 Why? Are your sentiments to me unknown?

*Asgilda.* Think'st thou I'm dead to feeling? Ignominy  
 Be unto me and mine the lasting lot,  
 And be Valhalla's bliss denied hereafter  
 If unbewept my husband pass away.

*Hakon.* And were those vows which fell by day and night  
 Heart-warm as 'twere from your applausive lips,  
 That I all treasures of your thought possessed,  
 Your love, your admiration, and indeed  
 That I alone (sole child) held place and choice  
 In your affections, that my exaltation  
 The altar was whereon all warring cares,



All scruples of the mind, and woman's shrinkings  
 Stifling, you'd offer,—were these vows but pastime  
 Divertments for the hour, unfelt, unmeaning?  
 Ha?—No: truer than were, than is this semblance.  
 You are that mother still; with me you hate  
 The heir of Norway, and the spleen of fortune  
 Which makes your step-son sovereign o'er your son  
 Still eankers your content.

*Asgilda.* It does; it doth  
 Envenom every breathing from my heart.  
 Long ere the gushings of ambitious hope  
 For thee have ceased, that step ye shall surmount.  
 Yet in this life-fall do I not discern  
 An instrument t' enlarge the avenues  
 Where our one fancy journeys. I do not.  
 His days fast favored us; alway his heart  
 From Oluph slacken'd to my wiles surrend'ring;  
 I should have won him to us.

*Hakon.* Never, never;  
 To hinder Oluph! To uplift your son  
 Above his first-born, in whose spirit alone  
 His mild and gentle temper found its fellow!  
 No, our advantage far outweighs the loss  
 In all the features of this strange event.  
 Hark now; he stands alone, has enemies;  
 Th' assassination eluded in th' unknown—  
 The unknown guilty!—here our triumph grows;  
 Here is the weapon which shall reap us all  
 That on the visions of our aspiration  
 Hath dawned. Behold'st thou not the vantage-ground  
 This darkness proffers us?

*Asgilda.* What means my Hakon?  
 I ponder but bewild'ringly, nor pierce  
 The sources of your joy. Discover them.

*Hakon.* Not now; no mean conception 'tis, and if  
 As thou proclaim'st, thy nature entertain  
 Close sympathies with mine, thy busied thought  
 Must soon possess it.

*Asgilda.* Since so wond'rously  
 This thee emboldens, I'll no more lament.  
 Now, list:

Gunild of Sweden—widely known it is—  
 Hath sought the hand of Oluph. These espousals  
 We all commended, but the prince himself  
 Therefrom revolted, and 'twas deemed of us  
 That he had plighted him to Drontheim's daughter.  
 Let the embassy depart with his denial,  
 And trust me Gunild's pride will work his ruin.  
 Let him wed Alsifa.—

*Hakon.* Forget you then  
 That Sigurd's child is chosen in my heart,  
 That there he robs me of another crown  
 Equal in price?

*Asgilda.* No, Hakon; but what hopes  
 Can you in reason nourish for the maiden?

*Hakon.* Shall I aid therefore his detested suit?

*Asgilda.* Can'st hinder it?

*Hakon.* Then wed they if they list;  
 But snatch not thou away nor blame me for  
 What seeds of discord I commingle may  
 In their life's cup.

*Asgilda.* But rather strive to help  
 Thy enmities in their development,  
 With most ability.

*Hakon.* Yours is not slight.

*Asgilda.* 'Tis not.

*Hakon.* Your ends come wrought as destiny  
 Were swayed by your desires.

*Asgilda.* Thou sayest truly.

*Hakon.* And men do say that you command an art  
 Beyond theirs.

*Asgilda.* Peace!

*Hakon.* That you are versed in magic.

*Asgilda.* No more!

*Hakon.* Familiar with the Runes and  
 Those chaunts that Heaven listeth and alloweth  
 Th' obeisance of the elements.

*Asgilda.* My son,  
 Beware!

*Hakon.* That Thorstein, feared of human kind,  
 Is known and friendly to you.

*Asgilda.* Ha, behold! [*Displays a poniard.*]

*Hakon.* That on his isle in congress ye have sat  
And loud in midnight incantations shared—  
Hence, woman, with your dagger! Do I speak  
Believing?

*Asgilda.* Why then madden me with these  
Vile scatterings of the common, basest mouth?

*Hakon.* No more, no more. Forgive me; know ye not  
That I best love my mother?

*Asgilda.* Thou alone  
Bear'st me affection; rather thee than harm  
I'd stifle my existence.

*Hakon.* I do think it.  
—Now will I much befriend the hopes of Oluph  
And help to weave this union; but the web  
—If thine and mine are worthy malices,—  
They'll dearly rue. But hast thou not yet grappled  
My lofty speculations on this death?

*Asgilda.* Ask me to-morrow.

*Hakon.* Well; my scope is lofty,  
Enforcement shall not fear to follow. Now,  
Awhile I leave you; for the prince draws nigh. [*Exit HAKON.*]

*Asgilda.* Hated necessity, that bids assume  
Hues and the form of desp'rate unfelt grief.  
Yet not so wholly, for my spouse did love  
And few indeed there are—O Oluph! now—

*Enter OLUPH.*

*Oluph.* These eyes beheld him: henceforth doubts nor hope  
Can share the question further. 'Twas his corse  
Unhonored of that spirit which adorned  
His time of world.

*Asgilda.* Who caused him perish? Speak,  
Ye spirits of the dead, whose homes are all  
The many of our mountains, who look down  
Upon our gestures, speak the murd'ers name.

*Oluph.* O queen!

*Asgilda.* What infamy of heart could marshal hand  
Against his days. Were not his place of pow'r,  
His age of honor and his frosted hairs,  
His kingly aspect shedding smiles around,  
Were they not armor to make dull all steels

Of treason?—Prince, your dear'st inheritance  
Should be to 'venge this foul assassination,  
With the demanded cost and jeopardy,  
Be what they may.

*Oluph.* By his remains I stood  
(But now, encasure of a soul more rich  
Than the proud sea's enbosomings) and swore  
—Calling to witness all the company  
Who dwell in Heav'n, whose eyesight dwells with us  
Seeing and knowing all,—I swore, whene'er  
'Twas given to behold the regicide,  
'This my sire's brand immediate to imbrue  
In the heart blood of him.

*Asgilda.* It is enough ;  
Relying on your justice and your oath,  
I'll staunch my heart's strong sorrow with firm hope  
Of an avenging stroke.

*Oluph.* How vain and empty  
Are valor, wisdom, counsel and resolve,  
Before such visitations. We are slaves  
E'en in our bravest hour most vaunted place,  
To the unseen. Now the instruction comes  
That fate hangs viewless shackles on our life  
More strong than combinations of our race  
With instruments of forge. A saddening truth.  
Say that we strike us deadly with a weapon,  
Is it free action? Or is it not this hand  
Officed of Heaven? It is; ours is submission,  
Unworthy freedom, power or foreknowledge  
We will endure and worship.

*Asgilda.* Be aroused ;  
Son of the dead be counselled,—wail no more.  
Shake, prince, this elinging sorrow from your heart ;  
Stern cares devolve upon you; give your mind  
Largely to their entreatment.—'Tis surmised  
That you have bent the gaze of fond affection  
On Sigurd's daughter.

*Oluph.* Why demand ye this ?  
How purports the inquiry? What approach  
Bears it toward this tempest of our hearts ?

*Asgilda.* Allayment and remove. To banish grief

I questioned ye.—Wed you with Alsifa ;  
 Drontheim hath too wide sway ; his pow'r extends  
 As far as e'er the king's. This troublous hour,  
 When foes abroad are threatful, it befits  
 Lessening his, to fortify your station.

These nuptials will more link him to the throne.

*Oluph.* Politic reasons ;—

*Asgilda.* Sigurd draws this way.

*Oluph.* And such sway not my mind.—Regarding this,  
 Lady, I will reply in fitter hour.

*Enter SIGURD.*

*Sigurd.* Prince, I am bold to break upon your quiet,  
 But such high ministry sweep single griefs  
 As sceptral sway.

*Oluph.* I am in disposition  
 For all desires of duty.

*Sigurd.* Word has come  
 That Erick with his ships and shrunken force  
 Has to King Harald's court betaken him,  
 And there finds kindly harbor.

*Asgilda.* Ay, all things  
 Mischiefs to Norway, though a pirate chief,  
 A driven prowler, find in Denmark's port  
 Safe riding, succors and refitment perfect.  
 —But I will leave ye, lords, to interchange  
 Unbroken consultation.

*Oluph.* Peace be with you. [*Exit ASGILDA.*]  
 Ay, we may look for fresh and strong invasion.

*Sigurd.* It is to apprehend ; and first, my lord,  
 First measure I advise your coronation.

*Oluph.* I name the time ; the coming day of Odin.

*Sigurd.* 'Tis well, my lord. Next were commendable  
 A scrutinizing and continued search  
 For this foul traitor.

*Oluph.* Servants are abroad  
 Fleet-footed in the land.

*Sigurd.* The embassy,  
 Which bears from Sweden's queen her marriage-offer,  
 Should speedily be answered ! 'Twere, methinks,  
 For the realm's weal to seize the tendered hand.

In such alliance with that powerful court,  
Norway would take more lustre from your sway  
Than from her ruler's e'er since Haarfager  
Her throne did rear.

*Oluph.* Earl Sigurd, thus allied  
Will Oluph never be.

*Sigurd.* And why? Gunild—

*Oluph.* Is fair of mein, and graceful royalty  
In her demeanor dwells; more may be spoken;  
Be it enough my heart can never own  
Affection for the princess.

*Sigurd.* Will Prince Oluph  
Upon the threshold of his government  
Spurn at the people's wisdom and advantage?

*Oluph.* Gunild of Sweden is no queen for Norway.  
Haughty her temper and unbowing, she  
As soon yourself would outrage as another.  
The kingdom bounds more noble hopes within,  
Nor will regret chastise her should the queen  
Be chosen of her daughters. T'ward your house  
My pref'rence leans; I rather would espouse  
Thy Alsifa,  
Than the most pride-clad sov'reign known to us.  
I make the offer now; if 'tis approved,  
Th' espousals shall go with my coronation.

*Sigurd.* Deliberation is content. Herself  
Consenting, I do give her thee: yet, prince,  
Did I not know your valor and your worth,  
Vainly you had besought. She shall be yours,  
And well will grace her fortunes. 'Twill appear.

*Oluph.* 'Tis well. Sweden's ambassadors shall now  
Have audience and response. The funeral rites  
Of my false-murder'd—gods, O gods! the thought  
Tolls us awake to sorrow—we must order.  
Then for a few brief hours I'll be thy guest.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Seat of Drontheim. A spacious hall.*

ADELSTEIN, ROLFF—to them enter ALSIFA; GULDHARALD and  
GUDRUDE, at chess on one side.

*Alsifa.* Cease, cease this unbecoming strife, my brothers ;  
Here surely might contentment dwell, and peace,  
If such your choice ; those hindrances of joy,  
Th' all-numberless calamities of life,  
Which rob its sweets and make repugnant man,  
Fortune from us withholds : can we not then  
Be grateful for the unmolested lot,  
Nor seek to vex each other and the gods  
With discord inexcusable and wrath  
And noisy quarrel ? Wherefore the dispute ?

*Rolff.* It angers me, when one rejects my praise  
Of Oluph, and his meritorious acts  
Denies to see.

*Adelstein.* I see no splendid feat  
In the repulse he gave to Erick's force.

*Alsifa.* Why do you ever mutter 'gainst the prince ?  
He alway wore a frankness and a grace  
Bespeaking amity, and now his arms  
They say were nobly borne. Erick to sea  
With num'rous loss was driven.

*Rolff.* He barely 'scaped  
By flight precipitate.

*Alsifa.* Thus be it ever ;  
Success to Norway's ranks, and tumult toss  
Among her foes.

*Adelstein.* Yet Erick is no foe.  
His birth is royal ; justice sanctifies  
These valorous efforts to possess the crown.

*Rolff.* Is he no foe ? Or is it a friendlike deed,  
The devastation of a tranquil realm ?

*Alsifa.* A noble and accomplish'd prince he's famed.  
With better rights attended he might war,  
Nor his renown be sullied.

*Adelstein.* Who his sire  
Save our King Harald?

*Alsifa.* Harald was dethroned,  
And acquiesced with exile; not his sons,  
Whose exercise and only maintenance  
Seem in the irreful struggle.—But myself,  
Who came conciliating, must beware  
Discordant question.

*Enter HAKON.*

—Welcome be Prince Hakon.

*Hakon.* Thanks, and my warmest wishes for your health.

*Rolff.* Prince Hakon, we do mourn, e'en with yourself,  
The tidings of the time.

*Hakon.* Our larger sorrow,  
By this not penetrable secrecy  
Attasked is, than by the loss itself;  
For he was waxed in seasons, and we looked  
For the accustomed change. Yet all foreknowledge  
Could not make easy on our souls the parting  
From such a sire. But the assassination  
With weapons merciless,—time, place and cause,  
All hidden in the dumbness of the perished,  
The art of the survivors,—is mischance  
So dire, as doth arouse the very fear  
Within us.

*Alsifa.* And on none falls man's suspicion?

*Hakon.* Men may suspect,  
May doubt, or form a wandering conceit,  
Or cast their eye on high, and sudden thence;  
They may have thoughts like dreams, most wild and rash;  
Yet oft describing truths, although for life  
Would they perhaps not perilously utter  
Their bold surmises. I have those within  
—Or rather sometimes in my moody hour  
Such thoughts come to me, as should eat my heart through,  
Long ere my tongue would venture to dismiss them.

*Adelstein.* Ha! Is it possible?

[*Aside.*]



*Hakon.* But shake we off as bootless and but idle  
 The contemplation of this deed of death ;  
 And let imagination glisten with  
 A countenance more cheering. *Alsifa,*  
 Has the recital come to thee how Oluph  
 Was prosperous in the strife ? He hath awaked  
 Within the souls of bards a song of triumph,  
 To float adown the unsafe stream of time. [Exit ROLFF.

*Alsifa.* True, and the issue of these threats of war,  
 Me joys unspeakably. I deemed his youth  
 Self-hazarding ; as yet, the winds of life  
 Have not breathed roughly on him—'tis the shocks  
 Make shakeless and unswerving the high oak,—  
 But skill in him hath left experience after.

*Hakon.* The mouths of men with warmest exultation  
 Applaud his val'rous conduct. He hath won  
 A winning victory ; it gains the hearts  
 Of those whom he expects to sway hereafter.

*Gudrude (to Gulldharald.)* More arrogant and haught he will  
 now be  
 Than ever prince before.

*Hakon.* Thou errest there,  
 For ne'er were honors yet more nobly borne  
 Than those he hath achieved. With a grace  
 To capture approbation in beholders,  
 He puts aside the mention of his feat.

*Alsifa.* O I do think so ;  
 His pride is modest, and his mind so shares  
 With all the world, that general benefits  
 Confer chief joy on him.

*Hakon.* If two should know,  
 Be perfect in each other, 'twere we twain.  
 It is my rooted knowledge that his mind  
 Is of that lofty tenor which would rather  
 The ruin of his life than e'er his hand  
 Should basely act.

*Alsifa.* Prince, I acknowledge joy  
 In listening the bounty of your praise ;  
 And to use candor, me it gladdens more  
 That 'twas your wont to underrate.

*Hakon.* Even so ;

Whose youth hath practised not the tongue of folly?  
And yet—

*Adelstein.* And yet who dare complain at dawn  
The feature of the day?

*Hakon.* O thou art right.

The fiercest storm in the least cloud oft lurks.

—Which one among us thorough knows himself?

Each hour enlightens us; things dark from birth,

Lurking within unseen, disclose their aspect

Strangely to us and suddenly. If then—

So with the mortal casings of this spirit;

Deformities inflicted are ofttime

When life's strange wood is almost threaded through;

Nature not takes her hand from us at birth.

Then if such imperfections spot our mind,

That we cannot determine of its bent,

How dare we judge of character not ours?

Rich in deception's glass,—

*Alsifa.* But now, Prince Hakon,

You tell of that which Norway doth not own.

We boast no art. Deception? Your best age

Was spent in Denmark's court. There 'twas you saw

Deceitful spirits. But in this stern clime,

The rugged not unlovely face of nature,

Outlooking from broad mountains and huge rocks,

Is mirrored in the children of the land.

Our hunted prey scorns craft and artifice.

*Hakon.* Therefore the more let 's fear it. To return  
To Oluph.

*Guadrude.* To return!

[*Aside.*

*Adelstein.* Prince Hakon, tell:

What escort did accompany the king

Repairing to the camp.

*Hakon.* Unchampion'd

By any save the faithful Einstein forth

Issued the king.

*Adelstein.* His victor-son returned

Untaught in this departure, I am told.

*Hakon.* Not altogether so: Why puttest thou me

These questions? Over something thou dost brood.

*Adelstein.* I? no. But my mind wanders for the cause

Of this dark guilty deed.

*Hakon.* And whose doth not ?  
Who bore him hatred ? Or whose weal is seeded  
In his destruction ?

*Alsifa.* Whose ? Surely no man  
Could therewith feed his profit and fell malice.

*Gudrude.* The prince achieved the crown some sooner hours.

*Alsifa.* Thrones twenty could not weigh his father's worth.

*Hakon.* 'Tis a blest fetter for those foul conceits  
Which villanous men do most delight to move,  
That far and wide the honor-sounded name  
Of Oluph through the land reverberates.

*Adelstein.* It will befit the prince to mark no haste  
In his advance toward the kingdom's crown.

*Hakon.* Fear not his proper conduct. 'Twere to fill  
The times with irritation to discover  
A graceless hurry in the throne ascending ;  
Ill-boldened hearts would proudly come abroad  
With most unmasked conceptions, and would scatter  
False doubts. Touch not his honor, Adelstein,  
With such supposals. Rather more I fear  
He will too widely shun precipitancy,  
Letting grief banish other requisite cares.

*Alsifa.* Prince Hakon, I have no art to understand  
The purpose of your words. Can 't be you doubt  
Some one of noble rank ?

*Hakon.* I, lady ? No ;  
I have not doubted any.

*Alsifa.* I did err then.

*Hakon.* I'd as soon doubt my brother, as the nobles ;  
They are most loyal all.

*Enter OLUPH and SIGURD.*

Behold him here.

*Sigurd.* Prince Oluph 'tis who visits us, my daughter.

*Alsifa.* My heart prompts word of thanks.

*Oluph.* Your absence, brother,  
Robbed us your counsel.

*Hakon.* In what question ?

*Oluph.* Touching  
The coronation of my father's heir.

'T has been determin'd to fulfil the form  
On Wednesday next.

*Alsifa.* My lord, your brother Hakon  
Hath, with a noble and becoming grace,  
Spoke your best praise while mentioning the feat  
You have performed.

*Oluph.* I thank my brother's love;  
And may this tongue be ever after dumb  
When it hath spoken else of him than good.

*Sigurd.* Alsifa, daughter of my age,—O prince!  
Must I relinquish her? it is her smile,  
That softens the rude temper of our natures.  
Prince Oluph and myself would fain with thee  
Awhile converse in quiet. [*Exeunt SIGURD, OLUPH, ALSIFA.*]

*Hakon.* Wednesday next!

*Adelstein.* Prince, we have caught the meaning from your  
mind.

You dared not give expression.

*Hakon.* Ha!

*Guldharald.* And all

Respond thereto.

*Hakon.* Is't true?

*Gudrude.* Ay, all.

*Hakon.* But mark me;

'Tis simply my suspieion.

*Gudrude.* 'Tis a just.

*Adelstein.* Our further thoughts we would diselose with you.

*Hakon.* Come to the palae then at sundown.

*Guldharald.* Well,

We will not fail. Farewell, till then.

*Hakon.* Farewell!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Apartment in the same.*

SIGURD, OLUPH, ALSIFA.

*Sigurd.* Wherefore, my daughter, art thou wrapt in silence?  
Is it the rush of thoughts upon your soul  
That bury utterance beneath their thong?

*Oluph.* Give, Alsifa, thy kindly accents forth,  
 To be of hopes creation in my heart  
 Chaotic now. Speak the complying word:  
 'Twill be inwoven finely with the future  
 Of Oluph's life, and lighten up existence  
 With enviable and a richer tint  
 Than mere mortality. Have not those forms,  
 Who do the biddings of our deities,  
 Frowned darkly on me? And above my head  
 Rent the afflicting cloud wrath-laden? Yes,  
 They snatched my father ere our peace was mad  
 Ere I had asked forgiveness. Be thou then  
 My fair companion, and my thoughts invite  
 From memory's shadowy vales!

*Alsifa.* To Oluph ever  
 Mine admiration bounded; but the throne  
 Awe my imagination. Since your choice,  
 Prince, and my father 'tis that I bestow  
 My hand and duteous love,—I do it freely.  
 Mine shall thy sorrows be, my joys be thine;  
 Those sympathies that minister relief  
 To tender be my solace. Thee if heaven  
 Wills further to afflict, the heart I own  
 Shall better show itself in thy misfortunes.

*Oluph.* I cannot doubt it.

*Sigurd.* How, my Alsifa,  
 Can'st thou so readily go forth from me?  
 Will not the dusky form of gloom confront me,  
 E'en at my threshold where thy hand hath used  
 To waive my welcome? Wilt thou not remove  
 The brightness of my days in thy out-going?  
 When thy harp's treasures are not poured around  
 Shall not our feasts be still as lawless meetings?

*Alsifa.* Father I know what is to thee this parting  
 What it doth cost thee to resign the child  
 Thou hast so cherished: that it is to lose  
 A portion of contentment——

*Sigurd.* Of existence.

*Oluph.* Lord Sigurd, why should this be separation?  
 Shall———

*Enter ADELSTEIN.*

*Sigurd.* How now, Adelstein?

*Adelstein.* Take Alsifa

From his thy hand.

*Sigurd.* What meaneth this?

*Adelstein.* Her weal

And happiness. These nuptials are not bless'd.

*Sigurd.* Rash boy, when was I known injurious words  
To suffer unchastised? How dar'st thou then  
Proffer such unrespecting boldness here?

*Adelstein.* It is not hardihood, but the strong sense  
That she herein will wed herself with woes  
T' embitter all her days, that makes me now  
Audacious-seeming.

*Oluph.* This concerns me nearly.

How are they threaten'd? Fear'st thou I will bring  
Sorrows upon the maiden? Or through me  
Grief shall attain thy sister? True it is  
I have no power to pierce the future's gloom,  
The timeless night; know not my fortune's store;  
But he maligns me who would start in thought  
Doubts of my constancy.

*Adelstein.* It is not that.

I will not more explain; but should my sister  
Become the spouse of Oluph, and thereafter  
Be visited with misery of mind  
With vex'd regret, unceasing and dire grief,  
Added from this hour's caution, then remember  
This my forewarning. For these things will come.

*Alsifa.* O is this brotherly or kind at all?

• *Sigurd.* Now by the powerful god who rolls in thunder,—

*Oluph.* Earl Sigurd, launch not yet your wrathful looks  
'Gainst Adelstein. Reasons have life in him,  
For these his motions. Brother of the maiden  
Declare the visions of your mind, that we  
Knowing of danger, may therefrom secure us,  
And pardon your affection's violent aspect.

*Adelstein.* This I will not.

*Oluph.* Then I wed Alsifa,

Her father's gift, and of herself consenting;  
And answer thou and suffer for what ills

Stalking beyond this match thou dost foresee.

*Sigurd.* I join the pray'r, and if a father's voice  
Hath power to sway decretal there, may Heav'n  
Those ill-successes thou dost contemplate  
But will reveal not, turn from those you menace,  
To light upon your head.

*Adelstein.* By all our gods!—  
Hither come I glowing with brother's zeal  
To shield by admonition from misdeed,  
And the fell fever of the soul create  
Of late repentance, which my mind forebodes  
With cause too just, and thus am greeted, thus.  
Why not unfold my proofs of prescience? 'Twould  
The pace of that approaching greatly quicken.

*Alsifa.* Rash and unthoughtful brother! See you not  
In such an hour, such language wreaks an evil,  
Not hinders? Would you fling betwixt a brand  
To sever the hoped union? Seminate  
Cold seeds of discord, and the trembling state  
Of constant dread? Think you that I would shun  
Perils akin to love and duty, full  
Albeit with menace.

*Adelstein.* When mean ye these nuptials  
To solemnize?

*Oluph.* The day of coronation.

*Adelstein.* So soon? Let them but follow, I'm content.

*Sigurd.* Withdraw; nor disobedience add to rashness.

*Adelstein.* I go; and let that come which you condemn  
In my forewarning. Ye will grieve for this. [Exit.

*Alsifa.* Strange and unkind!

*Sigurd.* Insolent boy! thou shalt  
This hardness regret.

*Oluph.* Mysterious words!  
Hath time in hand more sorrows for this head?  
Why let them fall; my solaces shall serve  
To make them harmless.—Sigurd, do not wear  
Displeasure thus; and chiefly let me crave  
Its silence 'tward your son. I scarce can think  
His strange demeanor reasonless, but moved  
By some imagined danger.

*Sigurd.* Some illusion

I deem it, and will think hereon no further.

*Oluph.* I leave ye now.

*Sigurd.* We will accompany,  
Ev'n to the banquet chamber. •Alsifa!

[*Ereunt.*]

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SCENE III.—*Chamber of Asgilda.*

ASGILDA, HAKON.

*Asgilda.* I now participate the mighty thought  
Thou daredst not yesternight confess.

*Hakon.* Art sure?

Hast thou discovered it? Yes, yes;  
Thine eye proclaims th' intelligence within.

*Asgilda.* Listen, and tell me if thy spirit points  
As my conjecture speaks:

“To affix the name of parricide on Oluph.”

*Hakon.* Is it not bold and brave?

*Asgilda.* Sublime it is;

I grow beneath the thought; my very mind  
Is strengthened as it were unto the work;  
More fine becomes my sense, and all this frame  
Is glad with lofty purpose. Let us do it,  
And be most sudden; place and time defy;  
To-morrow—ay, when in the sacred grove  
He shall be crowned and wedded.—

*Hakon.* Even then

I have resolved this charge be thunder'd forth.

*Asgilda.* Brave and dear offspring! Hast thou yet ta'en steps  
Toward this daring object? Sunk their doubts  
Deep in the minds of men?

*Hakon.* I have filled many,

Even to firm assurance, with belief  
Of Oluph's guilt. Alstein, the sons of Drontheim,  
Thorleif and other nobles I must meet  
This midnight,—

*Asgilda.* Time is almost there;—

*Hakon.* In yon



Dark corner of the terraces to plot  
The accusation ; and that demagogue,  
Bold Metzalong, hath vowed to lend his aid,—

*Asgilda.* Great is his influence o'er the populace,—

*Hakon.* —In this high undertaking. Truth they deem  
Our shrewd insinuations.

*Asgilda.* So, well done!

The fearful strangeness which defends this deed  
So strongly from all search, shall will mankind  
To our instilments and dark charge of Oluph.  
We follow our bold art, they their belief,  
And he must fall; while he ascends the throne  
It totters. 'Tis thine hour. Thy glories gleam  
As his do fade away.

*Hakon.* And if we fail,

Th' attempt ennobles; better 'tis to perish,  
Than bow before a brother's hated sceptre.

*Asgilda.* That sceptre thou shalt sway.

*Hakon.* And from your art

Learn ye this?

*Asgilda.* Look from yonder casement; see  
Lights creep along the garden.

*Hakon.* They are those  
Whose I must meet assembling now.

*Asgilda.* 'Tis true.

The brothers of the spouse—how gained ye them?  
Heav'n lends us help methinks. Go, go, my son;  
Be wary and be fearless, for our gods  
Let valor prosper in whatever heart.

*Hakon.* My mother's spirit lives in me; no time  
Shall its dishonor see. I go, farewell!

[Exit.

*Asgilda.* Fortune, whose smile now wakes within his breast  
Hopes, and in mine no less, desert him not;  
Full thither guide him, even to the mark  
Existence aims at, and this bosom's throbs  
Will beat their knell, and in their shackles cold  
Exult, the clay-formed fetterings of death.  
I love him, for I've seen the canker grow  
Within him, fruit and germ alike of hate,  
Of noble passion. I have seen the poison  
Enter his heart, now when the praise was poured

At banquets of the nobles, praise of him  
 More seeming near the throne; now at the throng  
 Of Odin's feast where Oluph's name rose highest,  
 Oft in the voice and always in opinion  
 Conquering one more worthy. Upon them  
 The minions, not of thee but of thy hopes,  
 Upon these things where though thy greater birth  
 Worked sorrows deep-infixing to the mind  
 Of Hakon,—not on these would I bewaste  
 Deserving vengeance, Oluph, but on thee  
 Destruction would I wreak, will direfully.  
 —Hakon, th' ambitious flame that burns in me  
 For thy advantage, ne'er will cease its glow  
 Till Oluph is as low as hate can wish;  
 For this, this only, have I overcome  
 The art which Odin taught, mysterious art!  
 Mingled with those whose spells command the deep  
 And torture it to rage; before whose charm  
 The sea-borne phalanx bends, infuriate winds,  
 To follow new direction; and from these  
 My hopes are strengthened. See, their lights have motion.  
 All is concluded, and their silent paths  
 They variously retread. [Exit.

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SCENE IV.—*A consecrated grove of some extent. Rock scenery in the distance. Images of Scandinavian gods scattered throughout. A rudely-hewn throne.—Time, sunrise.*

*Three SKALDS.*

1st Skald.           Cleft on the peaks is night,  
                           And midway gush the purple streams of day,  
                           Bounding from hill to hill,  
                           With the gladdening gift of light:  
 Hail, morning in thy splendor! all good will  
 Of Heav'n to nations dwell in each thy ray!

2d.                    Odin, of giants sprung,  
                           Yet long before the ages had their birth,

- Or time itself appoint,—  
 How shall thy might be sung,  
 Thy glory, wisdom, bounty over earth?  
 Earth, from the frame disjoint  
 Conjoined of giant race!
- 3d. Thou slewest thy tribe, and in dull chaos rose,  
 First onliness and last;  
 Then of the bulk, like space  
 Tremendous, bulk of Imma did'st compose  
 This world, this glorious vast,  
 Where all extol thy name.
- 1st. His opened veins rolled oceans to the vales,  
 His bones the mountains rear'd,  
 And his last breath became  
 The spirit of the winds, whose voice in gales  
 Soft-murmuring at the break of day, is heard.
- 2d. Flowed hath the vietim's tide  
 To Thor the terrible rider of the wind,  
 To valor-girded Thor;  
 To Frea the all-father's bride,  
 Valhalla's goddess, kindest to our kind,  
 The heifer in its gore  
 Lies quivering.
- 3d. Lift, lift,  
 Love in the joyful strain,  
 Love, reverence, adoration alway sing  
 That pure content, the god's own gift,  
 May endlessly beside our prince remain.

*Enter OLUPH, HAKON, NOBLES, GUARDS.*

*Oluph.* O hallowed spot and tranquil, let no sound  
 Of hatred inharmonious rise this day  
 Amid your murmuring branches to disturb  
 This solemn, this becoming stillness. Trees  
 In your fair foliage sacred, and thou throne  
 Where sate in honor one whose blessings dwell  
 Upon the land, ye emblems of the gods,  
 And thou, blue firmament, witness the prayer  
 With all sincerity to Heav'n I make:  
 Whene'er I prostrate my inheritance  
 To a dishonoring purpose, and to aught

Borne from the impulse of embosom'd malice,  
 Or passion lawless and not justified,  
 Let me not walk in man's regard, but turn  
 Me off from fellowship and hope, fore'er  
 In sad disgrace to dwell, and endless shame.

—Behold! the fair companion of my place  
 Approacheth, while my heart beats high in joy  
 And proud self-gratulation.

*Enter SIGURD and ALSIFA.*

Maiden! words

Can utter no such welcome as the thought  
 Heaves to thee in this hour. Ascend this seat  
 With the consent and ample satisfaction  
 Assuredly of all whose course of life  
 Doth honor Norway; from the Finian Bonde,  
 Whose year starlighted-half, he spends not joyless  
 Mid furs and meditations, to the rough  
 Dweller of Baltic's shore and Baltic's sea,  
 Who toils unfeebled on the rageful deep  
 For the deep's habitants. Wide sway of these  
 Thou wedd'st in me.

*Alsifa.* Thee only, for no rule  
 Becomes me; but inseparable power  
 Wield thou with best content and praise of all.

*Sigurd.* All happiness to both! And now, my lord,  
 Allow to enter hither all your people,  
 And (festive time unhindered) be the form  
 Of coronation expedite.

*Oluph.* Invite  
 The many here. Lord Alp, whom have they chosen  
 Their officer to-day?

*Alp.* Bold Metzalong.

*Sigurd.* One of exceeding license, and unheld  
 By a respect of person, place, or time.

*Oluph.* Long may our people boast the spirit of freedom.

*Sigurd.* Their freedom in his hands would be their shame.

*Thorleif.* Not so, Lord Sigurd, he is their true friend.

*Alp.* Rather a foe toward their best of friends.

*Thorleif.* The nobles?

*Alp.* Ay; whom he derides incessant.

*Alsifa.* But look, the throng with festive mien pour hither.

*Enter METZALONG, with People.*

*Oluph.* Sits all in readiness? •

*Hakon.* All is disposed.

*Oluph.* Lord Sigurd, challenge in th' assembled mind  
Whatever may oppose th' assumption now  
Of the throne's realm by me, his heir proclaimed  
By my late funeral'd sire.

*Sigurd.* You hear, Lord Thorleif:  
Your answer in the name of all the nobles  
We do await.

*Thorleif.* Thus I reply for all:  
We cannot thence dissent.

*Alp.* In courteous terms,  
We welcome Oluph to his father's scat;  
With wisdom, valor, strength and perfect act,  
We look to see him sway a taintless sceptre.

*Thorleif.* Lord Alp—

*Alstein.* Restrain thee, for our time draws nigh.

*Sigurd.* Thee, Metzalong, we call on to proclaim  
The sense of Norway in her greater portion  
The people.

*Metzalong.* Chos'n their spokesman, I reply.  
When 'tis impossible nor safe to hinder,  
We well may suffer.

*Sigurd.* Pitable 'tis  
When hardihood with insolence is wedded.

*Sveno.* He is a traitor to his duty. All  
And every, save himself, approve not only  
But welcome the succession. Do ye not?

[*Applause with clangor of armor*]

*Sigurd.* Lord Alp, fulfil your charge.

*Alp.* With utmost joy.

(*Crowns Oluph.*) Behold our king.

*Sigurd.* His length of reign be happy.

*Oluph.* Warriors, nobles, and in one, Norwegians,  
With your consents, the kingdom's crown I take.  
So help me Frea, Thor, th' all-father Odin  
Omnipotent, as I shall seek your welfare,  
In all my thoughts and actions, your content.

Our ancient use be ordinance and law ;  
 Obeying which, I wait to be instructed  
 By nobles and the people in the first  
 Chief and most earnest sovereign employ.

*Sigurd.* Speak the injunction, Thorleif; so our laws  
 Approve, to Oluph it shall be as law.

*Thorleif.* O prince,  
 'Thou hast demanded and I thus make answer :  
 The murder of our king inhabits night  
 And thought-bewild'ring darkness. Shall this be ?  
 Shall Norway take such stabs upon her name,  
 Nor ery on vengeance ? nor the doer seek ?  
 O Oluph, Oluph, search and give to us  
 For punishment this murd'rer.—Our demand.

*Oluph.* Exists there then such boundless sway in us ?  
 To conjure up the sun at midnight ? Still  
 The maddened billows ? What our power allows  
 Have we not footed and despatched pursuing ?  
 To compass this mysterious deed, is done  
 What man may do. Wherein have we neglected——?  
 But no; your better scope we will behold,  
 Your counsels welcome with our thanks and follow.

*Sigurd.* Thy utterance of the people's wishes now,  
 O Metzalong, we wait.

*Metzalong.* Bestow attention,  
 And suffer to enjoin a weighty task.  
 How wond'rous secrecy about this death  
 Fortune or art hath hung impenetrate,  
 A voice this day hath told: not newly told,  
 For long the general murmur dwells and harps  
 In lengthened eensure on this given chord.  
 Surmises mouth to mouth are whisper'd; doubts  
 Harboured in multitudinous honest breasts,  
 Do fearfully strike at thy shieldless honor.  
 Therefore exculpate, king, thy filial self,  
 Thy royal state with pomp and power engirt,  
 Thy name by plausibility attain  
 And living circumstance, exculpate these  
 From guiltiness and all participation,  
 In that which has been done.

*Oluph.* Guilt ? of what deed ?

*Metzalong.* The deed of parricide.

*Alsifa.* False-minded man,  
To think such crime was e'er.

*Sigurd.* Let him die, king.

*Thorleif.* Say that the multitudes do stand with him,  
The voucher of his words. Shall they all die?

*Sigurd.* Die all such traitors.

*Oluph.* Peace! O'er no suspicions  
Can upright power be exercised; but evil,  
As these bold-utter'd words, improperly  
Were unchastised. Such heinous falsehood as  
Doth prompt his language, and his language aims  
To spread among the hearers, guilt so foul  
As to conceive such foulness elsewhere,—Gods!  
What heart could nerve the hand parrieidal?—  
Nor records nor tradition gave us ever.

*Thorleif.* Stay execution till on me pronounced  
And those about me, nobles. We uplift  
Our voice accusatory; thee we charge  
With the destruction of thy perished father,  
By instigation, bribes, or thy own stroke;  
Whether by ambush or assault, by night,  
In undiscovered manner, secret place.  
Defend thee, cleanse thee if thou can'st from these.

*Oluph.* Now, by the gods! this is not sufferable.  
The rashness of this calumny shall fall  
Back upon thee and on thy crew.

*Sveno.* Sire—

*Oluph.* Guards,  
Seize ye the twain who vie in insolence;  
Thorleif and Metzalong.

*Metzalong.* We will withstand ye.  
Countrymen, 'tis your cause. Your noblest powers  
Are bended 'gainst yourselves. Lend me your arms,  
And rise before oppression. [Applause

*Sigurd.* Guards, fulfil  
Your bidding and arrest these traitors.

*Alp.* Earl,

Do ye not see the people are opposed?

*Oluph.* A sword to me! rebellion must be stifled.

*Alsifa.* Sercnely bear, my lord, this bold assault;

Harm on their heads, not ours, will spring therefrom.

*Sveno.* My lord,—

*Oluph.* To take th' abuse? or vengeance?

To punish? or contemn? •

*Sigurd.* Sweno, what say'st?

*Sveno.* Let the king hear, and grant me my poor prayer.

Metzalong falsely slandered hath his prince;

I dare him with his sword to combat me,

Else I declare his words foul villany

And conscious guilt. Grant me this only boon,

And Heav'n will fortune give where 'tis deserved.

*Oluph.* He is beneath thy hazard.

*Sveno.* Not so, king;

The people honor him, permit the strife.

*Sigurd.* Metzalong, dare you to accept his offer?

*Metzalong.* I do defy him joyously.

*Alp.* Consent;

The populacc will lose in him a chief

Who interrupts their loyalty of heart.

*Oluph.* Enough; when will you undertake the battle?

*Sveno.* My lord, immediately.

*Metzalong.* No delay.

*Oluph.* The judgment is from Heav'n, when champions test

Their cause in mortal strife. Odin below

Lest this irrevocable vow; that right

Should alway conquer in the single combat.

Go, Metzalong—go, Sweno; arm ye well;

Commend your truths to Heav'n, on Heav'n rely,

[*Exeunt* METZALONG, SWENO, *People.*

For just reward or doom.

*Hakon.* Let us all witness,

Nobles, this much-importing action.

*Adelstein.* Bring us.

[*Exeunt* HAKON, THORLEIF, ALSTEIN, *Sons*  
*of* SIGURD, *and other Nobles.*

*Oluph.* Sigurd,—

*Sigurd.* My lord.

*Oluph.* Your sons, good Sigurd, stood

Rebellious in my presence. And yourself?

*Sigurd.* Do therefore closelier bind me unto you.

My sons are hated and revolted thralls;



Like disobedient slaves they shall be treated.

*Oluph.* Thanks; but good Earl, Lord Alp, and all who choose  
Friendship and loyalty, awhile go from me.

See that the lists are honored, and the strife  
Led fairly through. My skalds, go all of ye.

[*Exeunt* SIGURD, ALP, SKALDS, &c.—*Guards,*  
OLUPH, ALSIFA, *on the opposite side.*

THE END OF THE SECOND ACT.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Palace.*

OLUPH, ALSIFA.

*Oluph.* Th' assassin of my sire! O long-lov'd parent,  
 If thou hast influence yet in mortal tides,  
 —'Tis our belief that destiny is swerved  
 By supplications of the glorious dead,—  
 Enfranchise me from doubt, and give to see  
 Who slew thee, and upon thy house hath brought  
 Such shame in accusation, and such sorrow  
 Immedicable.

*Alsifa.* Wonder strives with anguish  
 That I should e'er behold the toils of envy  
 Encompassing thy name, O Oluph, so  
 That men deem seated guiltiness in thee.  
 —But be assured, this cabal, whose attempt  
 Is on thy place, will weary in their strength,  
 And their pernicious arts be best their ruin.  
 Sweno will prove victorious in this strife  
 And man's false estimation will succumb.

*Oluph.* Griefs are but steps to greater, higher griefs;  
 So let me clothe my temper in a mien  
 Proof to all tasks. Let huge affliction come,  
 I will not merit it in coward shrinkings.—

*Enter HAKON, SIGURD, ALP.*

The issue of the fight?

*Hakon.* Sweno was conquer'd.

*Sigurd.* He was, my lord. His prowess was as naught  
 Against th' enemy's giant bulk and vigor,  
 And dying from the contest he was borne.

*Oluph.* No more is Sweno; and more valiant spirit  
 Ne'er ceased to be.

*Hakon.* More than his life in death

The soldier lost. The king's repute falls with him.

*Oluph.* This day is festive with the populace;  
Take note, Lord Alp, that nothing be defect  
And failure of a liberal entertainment. [Exit ALP.  
Hakon, when in the sacred grove this day  
Our name was soiled by evil breath, thy speech  
Nor indignation seemed thereat aroused.  
Could'st thou thus master wrath, and wear thy looks  
Thus unsurprisedly.

*Hakon.* Doth not amazement  
Fetter the tongue ofttime? What could I utter?  
Was greater knowledge given me than them?  
Rather did I not yearn to understand  
Truths from your lips?

*Oluph.* Hakon, thou knowest well  
That I do suffer of this mystery  
E'en as thyself.

*Hakon.* You say it.

*Sigurd.* With the rest,  
Prince Hakon, it may be, presumes to doubt  
His brother's innocence.

*Oluph.* Thou doest him wrong;  
He was my father's son.

*Hakon.* Whate'er my doubts  
Or my presumption be, I warn the king  
To cleanse his reputation of these stains.  
The multitudes are growing in their wrath;  
Should you your honor scorn to vindicate;  
Your crown and life shall be in jeopardy.

*Oluph.* Thanks for your counsel. Think you this bold front  
Upon the people 'gainst th' enthroned, we suffer?  
By Heav'n with much restraint our powers this day  
Slumbered untasked. The rashness they shall rue;  
Time will divulge the secret of this death,  
And then shall this hand punish, not alone  
The murderer, but th' assailants of my honor.

*Hakon.* —Lady, your nuptials are but darkly traced.  
This cruel forwardness in fortune's malice  
Discolors hope; with failing hearts we look  
Upon the mantle of the hours to come.  
Sadden'd must be your heart, and more than I

For thy unhappiness none grieve.

*Alsifa.*

Behold!

My spouse is here. 'Tis not unknown how long,  
How fixedly we each in the other's love  
Abided. Him and only I e'er set  
In walks and avenues of all my thoughts.  
Now, he has answer'd, more rejoicing far  
Than hidden hopes did ever my poor heart.  
Then,—for this late despite, reject me, Heaven,  
If I do sorrow for my portion, slight  
In the affliction. Prince, 'twould more beseem  
Thy brotherhood to front thy brother's foes,  
Then spend these all-importless sympathies.

*Oluph.* Hakon at once be boldly open, or  
Upon or 'gainst my quarrel. Doubts of thee  
Are nourish'd in me. Wish ye to ally  
With enmity and blinded ignorance  
Or with the hated object?

*Alsifa.*

Can'st thou pause?

Can love, fraternity and royal nature,  
And the sad fellowship of sore distress  
In a dear father's loss, be overthrown  
And quelled by some dishonorable passion?  
Who may believe it?

*Sigurd.*

I.

*Hakon.*

As yet my mind

But fears, not charges guilt. Where multitudes  
Build credit, must have been some proper ground.  
Harass me not, neither yourself for me;  
But rather guard your much imperill'd state.  
Your subjects are not slaves; their accusations  
'Twere meet to answer, lest enclafed with wrath,  
Your place against them no protection prove.

[*Exit.*

*Alsifa.* Thus, thus, they turn upon you; but, my lord,  
Your hour of strength will come.

*Oluph.*

But do not let

These accidents infect your joy's good health;  
Think them but fancies. I will shortly seek you.

[*Exit ALSIFA.*

Occasion bids me now unfold the purport  
Of late-arrived messages from *Erick*.

That Harald hath espoused Gunild you know,  
 And that young Erick makes his court a home.  
 The supplications of the bride and guest,  
 She fierce for vengeance, he for domination,  
 Have wrought the feeble monarch to sound war  
 Upon us. This to wage is their whole bent,  
 Whereto all cost with time and toil enslaved,  
 Hasten'd their preparations—ended them;  
 Till now the seas heave with their armament  
 Which wing in course to Norway.

*Sigurd.* How, my lord ?

So soon embarked ?

*Oluph.* So soon. Midwinter's winds  
 Some time will toss them; when upon our lands  
 They must be met at once.

*Sigurd.* Pernicious hour  
 For foreign enmity.

*Oluph.* Too sore a truth.

*Sigurd.* 'Tis past denial, that the people's hearts  
 Do favor not your sway. When these shall land,  
 I doubt if opposition can be levied.  
 Some powerful foe of yours creeps through the crowd,  
 And wakes this foul delinquent spirit. This  
 All things compel my mind to think.

*Oluph.* And mine!  
 Could we but seize this traitor, and chastise  
 With ignominious proclaim and proof  
 Of villanous attempt, the giddy throng  
 Would own revolt and follow our best bidding.  
 Who and where is this false-seducing wretch ?  
 Might he not be the murd'rer of our king;  
 Who seeks his guilt in double guilt to hide ?

*Sigurd.* You strike my mind with thoughts. Indeed, he  
 might,

And he must be high-stationed, thus to wield  
 The general fancy. Might it not—O king,  
 Your brother hates you; thus he hath avowed  
 But now; his influence is not despised;  
 'Tis he hath poisoned the weak loyalty  
 Of the base orders.

*Oluph.* It might be.

*Sigurd.* May 't be  
That he hath wreaked this murder?—

*Oluph.* No, Lord Sigurd,  
'Tis a harsh dream of yours. • Albeit my sire  
Loved not o'er well this son, yet not this son,  
Nor any offspring his could guide a thought  
Against the life of such paternity.

What could he hope?—But to our other theme:  
We must assemble forces large and strong,  
With utmost speed. Him who enlightens us  
Upon the question of this death, we raise  
To noble rank. Be this proclaimed.

*Sigurd.* My duty  
Calls me some little time to my domains.  
This finished, to your side I will rehaste.  
Meanwhile, my lord, be wary of those near'st;  
You are embayed in danger; though too much  
Misfortune has been o'er your house and name,  
More is to fear.

*Oluph.* Thanks, Sigurd; fare thee well. [Exit OLUPH.]

*Sigurd.* Too much to fear. Hakon his treachery owns,  
Conspirators about him; and as 'twere,  
His arm of power griped by those behind:  
Nothing but bravery and few friends to aid:  
Bloody invasions, and dissentious subjects,  
—All task his energies. These bear him up.  
Now to my home, and these disgracing sons. [Exit.

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SCENE II.—*Chambers of Asgilda.*

ASGILDA.

Ha! 'tis the loved of Oluph. Why she comes  
To these apartments where few sympathies  
Await her to upeheer, I'm ignorant.  
—So youthful, in such snowy robes moved I  
In other seasons; then the unripen'd mind  
Had the full meed of virtue's commendations.

*Enter ALSIFA.*

Daughter, the visit is acceptable,  
And hath my thanks.

*Alsifa.* Withhold them, till assured  
That friendship leads me hither.

*Asgilda.* Give to know  
What meditated object, good or ill,  
Directs your steps to me.

*Alsifa.* The eye of woman  
Looks deep in woman's thoughts. Oh, I have read,  
—Pray Heaven, erringly,—designs and works  
Of malice, and unnatural complots,  
In each your muffled and disguised motion,  
Your whisperings with Hakon, and those glances,  
Freighted intense with rancor, which do level  
At Oluph, the maligned.

*Asgilda.* I am not moved  
By arrogance in youth, or haughty words  
To humbling passion; nor am capable  
To brook the whirlwind of revilings rash,  
Respectless. Therefore, leave me, child; withdraw.

*Alsifa.* Strange machinations are afoot; they smite  
The prince, who, dim with generous amity,  
Beholds no adversary. O supreme,  
All-worshipped gods! why should there be a heart  
So strange to nature, goodness and the voice  
Within censorious, so devout in guilt,  
That all-remorselessly it dare to gore  
And sacrifice the noble name of man  
As fellowly and bountiful as Oluph?

*Asgilda.* Dost thou upbraid me with his woes?—I pity  
That fate of thine, so innocently linked  
With one who dealt unshuddering, parricide.

*Alsifa.* Oh jealousy! not worms upon the fountain  
Do so deform, as thou the soul of woman,  
Making all poisonous and unsightly. Queen,  
Your schemes are known; for Oluph's overthrow  
You have uproused the ire and hate in men,  
Pretending guilt enormous, in his fall  
That Hakon be exalted. O beware!

If prosper these foul art'fices, (as oft  
Foulness prevails with praise of multitudes,)  
His downfall if ye compass, his destruction,  
I threaten yours; and if ye know what doom  
The mighty heart of right revenge can wreak,  
Forbear your perilous contrivances  
And shut up hope in virtue.

*Asgilda.* Time approaches  
When thou shall contemplate th' unbarred guilt  
Of this beloved. Know'st thou not, unhappy,  
That ere this violent death, the king and Oluph  
Conversed not friendly; but gloomy strangeness,  
And separation unallayed maintained,  
And pastured with their peace? And wherefore? Raged  
Thy love in the youth's bosom, and uptore  
All filial feeling, when the father vowed  
No wedlock to permit. This love, this fiend,  
Which maddens man or woman t' immolate  
The holiest living ties, and deem't religion,  
Possessed him in an hour when wrath ran high,  
To take the opportunity by the hand,  
And put away all blockings and opposers  
Of his elchoice scope. Then with unhallow'd haste  
He seized the treasure; and forgot that guilt  
Is longer-lived than love.

*Alsifa.* I ne'er knew this.

*Asgilda.* Oh, it is true; and when his destiny  
Drags in thine own to ruin, maidens weep  
For thy misguided days.

*Alsifa.* I'll hear no more;  
Unholy charms befriend your tongue of falsehood.

*Asgilda.* Then hearken not nor speak; leave me I bid.

*Alsifa.* Can'st thou recall the spirit of the departed,  
And see it else than awful with rebuke  
Of thy ungratefulness, pursuing him  
In his begotten? Will he not wake vengeance  
In Heav'n to arm against thee, and o'erwhelm  
Both thee and thine, in huge yet vain dismay?

*Asgilda.* My words, truth-shafted, pierce thee; thou begin'st  
To pale with fearful knowledge of the cloud



Inpending o'er thy weal. But there's no help;  
 Death groans for retribution; and makes keen  
 His instruments for Oluph.—Go in silence,  
 For exclamation will not profit more;  
 Nor aught, save calm endurance.

*Alsifa.* I have said,  
 Record it Heaven! and I will see 't fulfilled;  
 If perish in thy toils the most-loved offspring  
 Of the late-sepulchred, one I shall find  
 Among the sons of men, who will exult  
 So vast a crime unnatural, abhorred,  
 To punish as were this. I do not speak  
 In passion;—witness Heaven! I were content,  
 If all-forgivingness reined in mankind  
 To gentle walks and love; but to forbear  
 In such a motive, were to lose the pardon  
 Of goodness on the earth, and joy hercafter.  
 Remember.

[*Exit.*

*Asgilda.* Appearance is good fortune on my side,  
 And of his guiltlessness moves almost me  
 To doubt. But no, there is that native spirit  
 Of childhood in his quarrels, which falls short  
 Of what comes after,—hate that perpetrates.  
 I pause not in my plans. Shall I forget,  
 That from the festal board his father sent  
 My Hakon for a slightful epithet  
 Applied of him to Oluph? How these things  
 Survive and burn within a woman's breast;  
 The thirst for vengeance still provoking more  
 And more with mem'ry! Were I born a man,  
 One only such command should ever issue,  
 —But ah! what aged and darkly-guised man  
 Draws nigh to me? Meseems the unsure step

*Enter EINSTEIN.*

Of Einstein. Say, whence comest thou, companion,  
 Of the late dead? Who slew him? Did'st thou witness?  
 His death can be to thee no mystery.

*Einstein.* It is none, lady.

*Asgilda.* Name the murderer then;

But tell wherefore so tardily thou com'st ?

*Einstein.* Hear me, O queen; spouse of the perished hero.  
When he was now no more,—stay, stay,—beside my grief  
Trouble and fear o'ertook me weak, me old,  
Lest my acquaintance with the deed and doer  
Wreak further ill. But dull seclusion tired,  
And soon the wise magician of the isle,  
Thorstein, I sought; him humbly begged to counsel.  
When with a solemn vow, I had unlocked  
In silence the dark act, to break it only  
When death should be my threat'ner, he enjoined me  
To seek ye out, bereaved queen, and what  
Your will obey it. Thence ye see me here.

*Asgilda.* But I must know th' assassin.

*Einstein.* Not from my  
Oath-guarded breast, but from the lips of Thorstein,  
The wished but dreadful tidings you may hear.

*Asgilda.* And will I not ? Oh soon. Dreadful the tidings ?  
Perhaps some noble hand. But be thou still  
As night or sepulchres.

*Einstein.* Einstein knows well  
To be so. These white locks, are not oath-breakers.  
Tell me, O queen, do they continue search  
For him who slew my master ?

*Asgilda.* Diligently.  
His life has Oluph sworn to take.

*Einstein.* Great Thor!  
Assist me, son of Odin !

*Asgilda.* Einstein, thee  
My spouse did well esteem. Shall be my care  
'Thy safety.

*Einstein.* Thanks, heart-wounded lady. Who  
Can better know thy griefs, than one whose life  
Told glad companionship with him men mourn ?

*Asgilda.* Escape; their search is for thee.

*Einstein.* No, these walls  
Are part of me, and all my happiness  
Cleaves with them. In despite of peril, here  
Must I sojourn this remnant of my life.

*Asgilda.* Then should'st thou wear a guise, wherefrom no tales

May issue, or no hints to light up dreams,  
Seem as a bard. Encounter thus the king,  
The hasty Oluph; tell some dismal fragment,  
And crave attendance.

*Einstein.* This not difficult  
To me, though visited with years, appeareth.  
Thanks for your counsel; straightway I will prove  
Its profit in effects.

*Asgilda.* To-morrow night!—  
Can'st thou this hour perform thy outward change  
And meet the king?

*Einstein.* I can, I will.

*Asgilda.* Farewell. [*Exit EINSTEIN.*  
I must to Thorstein suddenly, and summon  
Discov'ry from his mind;—but when 'tis learned,  
Proof must be buried. While the guilty walks,  
One other suffers for his deed, more hated  
Than all the guiltiest spirits of the earth. [*Exit.*

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SCENE III.—*Scat of Drontheim.*

ADELSTEIN, GUDRUDE.

*Adelstein.* The muster'd force is ample for our purpose.

*Gudrude.* Gulldharald with his numbers from our lands  
Will strengthen them.

*Adelstein.* By Heav'n! our industry  
That gathers us such powerful help and brave,  
Rivals our high intention's hardihood.

*Gudrude.* It doth; and happ'ly have we chos'n the hour;  
For he will come with an exceeding wrath  
Our boldness to correct, that time the prince  
Was taunted and word-stricken.

*Enter GULDHARALD.*

*Gulldharald.* Fierce from the mines and earnest for our bidding,  
A potent band I bring. Alacrity  
Made answer to my call where I appeared.  
We are now capable to look defiance

Into the kingdom's face should such be needed.

*Guadrude.* Partner, we thank your fearless diligence.

*Adelstein.* The kingdom dare not frown on our endeavor,  
For royalty shall soon be poor as he  
Whom we impov'rish.

*Guldharald.* True I harbor hopes  
Of Oluph's sudden downfall. Hakon's plans  
Are warrantable and of force.—But hark!  
He is now coming.

*Guadrude.* True; but let me pray ye  
Do him no needless wrong.

*Adelstein.* What! fear'st thou now?  
Timorous at heart, Guadrude?

*Guadrude.* E'en as you like then.  
'Tis well when all is past.

*Guldharald.* Be bold, not rash;  
See what a wrath lives in that seated scowl.

*Enter SIGURD.*

*Sigurd.* Guadrude and Adelstein, my sons, and thou!  
I marvel as I gaze that ye dare lift  
Unshrinking front before me. With what color,  
What nerve, what heart, rebellious, could ye sting  
Ascending majesty? Y' have joined yourselves  
With base audacity, and on your king  
Revilings such as issue from the mouths  
Of wild effront'ry and inebriate folly,  
On innocency heaped and kindest nature  
Deep-grieving nobleness. I know ye not;  
Y' have struck your path from out your parent's heart.

*Adelstein.* Repentless art thou of that flagrant fault  
Which lost thy daughter to this parricide?

*Sigurd.* Wherefore should I waste answer, that denying  
Ye knew untrue? O from how false conceptions,  
Sprung slander and misspeech of worthier prince  
Than ever Norway blessed! Beside whom stood,  
Whom honored I your father and your sister!  
No less an outrage on your blood, if me  
You had disvouched, and on me cruelly drawn  
The knife at household table. Do ye know

What mischievous opinions in the throng,  
Disloyalty, and pestilent revolt,  
Your dastard stand conspicuous inspires ?

*Godrude.* It gladdens us to know th' event we hoped.

*Sigurd.* Your hopes befriend you then, for never more  
Shall ye abide beneath the sheltering roof,  
Within the shielding portals customary ;  
No, though your strengths were needed to uphold  
That roof threat'ning to crush, or these old walls  
To man from ravenous foes. Depart from me ;  
Henceforth forever out of heart and hearth  
I banish you, to be contemned outcasts,  
Unless (mark this your only hope) from Oluph  
You gain humiliate peace, and for your guilt  
Pardon beseeching sorrowfully.

*Gulldharald.*

Peace!

And list our answer. We have seen thee give  
A maiden, daughter of the Earl of Drontheim,  
To an usurping murderer, and assoil  
The countenance of your honor in support  
Of one 'gainst whom is bended honesty.  
Thou hast withstood a people wronged, maltreated,  
Beside that viperous ingrate whose fell nature  
Was proved e'en to thy unconfessing mind.  
Earl, thou art old ; the people ask those chiefs,  
Whose youthful faculties do play in chime  
With their good joys and gladness, and none such  
As sanction usurped and detested power.  
Advisedly we therefore take these lands,  
Thy earldom and dominion from thy weak  
Mastership. Henceforth, Sigurd, be deposed  
To wander, or abide where'er thou list ;  
So nevermore thou namest this thy home.  
O trouble not yourself with further ire,  
Nor tax our violence by mad retort ;  
Submissiveness is only manhood now,

*Sigurd.* Where are my servants ? Dungeons and full chains,  
Famine and darkness, are the happiest guerdon—  
Ho, there! my thralls,

*Godrude.*

See, they obey the call.

*Enter a number of armed RETAINERS.*

These were your subjects, now are ours, beside  
An army of such resolute.

*Gulldharald.* Now, now

What say'st thou? Haughty man thy pride  
Hath dragged us to the precipice, but thou  
Shalt be the victim, shall descend th' abyss.  
Have we not brooked o'erlong your arrogance  
To let slip mean of vengeance?

*Sigurd.* And do these slaves acknowledge then your rule?

Bid them defy this weapon. Come, together;  
Death is no worse than to remember this.  
The dead man's curse be on ye; may all hours  
Rankle despair within those recreant breasts;  
The feverish fear of poison and of steel,  
Of ignominious penury, man's scorn,  
And treachery attend ye to the grave;—

*Enter ROLFF.*

*Rolff.* Tremendous gods, I feared it; come, dear sire,  
We'll fall together,

*Sigurd.* How, my boy! thou faithful?

*Adelstein.* Seize them, and to the gates convey them.

*Gulldharald.*

Yes,

And throw them to the dust before the castle;  
Then bar the portals well.

*Sigurd.*

O Rolff!

*Rolff.*

O Father!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Palace.*

OLUPH, EINSTEIN.

*Oluph.* Thy tale creeps in my heart and steals thee honors.  
Misfortune sets its standard in these halls;  
Welcome be thou, unhappy and infirm,  
To our but poor protection.

*Einstein.*

O my lord,

Devotion be my thanks. This care-worn heart  
Is feeble but 'tis true.

*Oluph.* Till we have felt  
The wounds of treachery, far underprized  
Is lealty's friendship-tear. And dost thou say  
That danger grows upon this night?

*Einstein.* A plot  
Upon your highness' life is ripening fast.  
The silence and the whisper smote my mind,  
As idly mid the revellers I strayed;  
The people, little jealous of one old  
And strange, did teach me in their crimeful purpose.

*Oluph.* Which you discovered me. You ne'er shall rue it.  
Misguided are my subjects, they shall wake  
From their delusion, and too late catch sight  
Of the base end to which they lend themselves.

*Enter SIGURD and ROLFF.*

*Rolff.* My lord I crave converse immediate  
With the young queen my sister.

*Oluph.* This apartment  
Enter: none have a better right. [*Exit ROLFF.*] Earl Sigurd,  
Your haste is happy; for most pressingly  
Our wish was to behold you. To assume  
Our place in this night's banquet, mid the nobles  
To represent our person, is a task  
To which you must consent. A wegthy cause  
Cries out upon our absence from this feast,  
Which shall be shown in after days.

*Sigurd.* My lord—

*Enter ALSIFA and ROLFF.*

*Alsifa.* O father! is this true? and might those brothers—

*Sigurd.* I have a daughter; let them laugh or weep,  
Perish or live and boast,—ingratitude  
Shall never sunder us.

*Oluph.* What may this mean?

*Alsifa.* My lord, there ne'er was witchcraft until now;  
Some demon wrests humanity from out  
The souls of men.

*Oluph.* O say what hath befallen.

*Sigurd.* Shame uncontrolled robs me the rising voice.

*Alsifa.* His offspring are revolted; as a beast  
Rends weaker beast to piecemeal, with such fury  
They pushed him from his dwelling, plundering  
Of domination, title and a home.

*Sigurd.* I am no more Earl Sigurd.

*Oluph.* O such an action, issuing from such source  
Indeed might make our virtues all a doubt.  
—Their folly more amazes me than guilt.  
Must they not know that their acquired state  
No boldness can maintain.

*Rolff.* You err, my lord.  
By subtle arts and liberal largesses  
All Drontheim is enlisted in their crime.

*Alsifa.* These rebels stood against their king; too well  
We might have feared such treason to their sire.

*Sigurd.* False children!

*Alsifa.* Father do not nourish wrath,  
Nor waste your weakened means upon these sons.  
One brother and myself are yours.

*Oluph.* Another  
Behold in me! A home beneath this roof,  
While it belongeth us, be thine good earl.

*Einstein.* O I have seen the virtues of this world  
Trod into dust; and nothing now remains  
But triumph-fattened passion.

*Alsifa.* Father, mine!  
Why upon thee do the gods throw their anger?

*Sigurd.* That I might know how sweet fidelity  
Is compensation for all woes. My lord,  
I will obey your wish, and mid the nobles  
Sit at this feast, instead of thee else-busied.

*Oluph.* I thank you. Go, good Sigurd, with the queen;  
Go, Rolff, and spend in mutual kind consolments  
The hours until that time.

*Alsifa.* Fare, fare thee well.

[*Exeunt ALSIFA, SIGURD, ROLFF.*]

*Oluph.*—My scouts and earnest seeking messengers  
By one and one have all returned to quench  
Hopes that did centre in discoveries  
Of Einstein. Vengeance is denied to me,  
And firm establishment.—Come, good old man.

[*Exeunt.*]



SCENE V.—*Before the gates. Tables. People feasting. Night.*

*Enter OLUPH and EINSTEIN, (disguised.)*

*Metzalong.* Have ye made fast your firmness to this purpose?

*1st.* Wherever you shall dare to lead, we follow.

*Metzalong.* Enough! one more carouse.

*2d.* Come tell us, chief,

Will not young Hakon sanctify our action?

*Metzalong.* Peace, peace. (*Drinks.*) Well, ye shall know  
thus much. Prince Hakon

Will deal a bounteous largess 'mong ye all,  
If fortune crowns our efforts.

*Oluph.* Ha, my brother!

Shan'st thou our house with base as false contriving?

*Metzalong.* Pray, who should these be?

*Einstein.* We are strangers, poor

And harmless.

*1st.* Sit you down and share the feast.

*Einstein.* Abundant feast! The smile and gladdening laugh  
Speak its enjoyment; who provideth this?

*2d.* The king.

*Einstein.* Bounteous prince! I nowise doubt, my friends,  
That equal gratitude with happiness  
Dwells in your hearts.

*Metzalong.* Trouble thy tongue, no more.

Our last—last goblet, friends.

From the eup to the sword we spring

With the sword on the halls to rush;

With valorous purpose arise!

From the throne hurl a blood-guilty king,

To the dust hurl and trample and crush:

Follow, the usurper dies.

*Einstein.* What means this tumult?

*Metzalong.* Gratitude, say'st thou?

We owe no thanks but what these steels shall render—

*Oluph.* Unto his enemies ever.

*Metzalong.* To himself.

Strengthen in resolution all, and follow.

*Einstein.* What, are there poisons in your cups, that now  
You band against the life of royalty ?

*2d.* On, on ;

The king must fall ere we stand here again.

*Einstein.* The gods forefend !

*Metzalong.* Gods ! we defy them.

*Einstein.* Hear,

He outrages the deities ; hark to him !

*Metzalong.* Come, no more speech.

*3d.* We follow.

*4th.* Ay, we follow.

[*Metzalong and two other followers rush through the  
gates, which, closing suddenly, hinder the rest.*]

*1st.* Wherefore is this ? re-open to us there.

*2d.* Who closed the portals ? Ho there, Metzalong !

*Oluph.* He hears thee not nor ever will again.

Retire, rash people, peaceful to your hearths ;

Study your personal honor, and keep guard

O'er your own bosoms ; who from out those spheres

The gods apportion'd them would wander, meet

Sudden disasters, helpless.

*2d.* Who art thou ?

*Oluph.* Thy king.

*1st.* O Thor, that Metzalong were here !

Who closed those gates ?

*Oluph.* Silence, bold subject ; hence

Your leader to captivity hath rushed :

Ye haply have eescaped. Get to your homes.

*2d.* Why is he punished ?

*Oluph.* Not for hate to us,

But his abuse of your too easy hearts.

Disperse, or else our guards shall scatter ye

With harmful violence. Do ye not obey ?

*3d.* We will have Metzalong ; we shall not hence.

*Oluph.* He hath, with treasonable word and purpose,

Rushed to a needful chastisement. Ye have

Parta'en of our most prodigal disbursement,

Is this an hour to turn against us ? Go.

Rebel to-morrow.

2d. Relf, if he is lost,  
As well depart at once.

1st. Have we then failed?  
I stay no longer.

[*Exit populace.*]

*Oluph.* Do not thou whisper this discovery  
Of lamentable guilt in my false brother.  
Let not such shame of actual wickedness  
Be visited, O Thor, upon our house!  
Enough, th' accursed crime. O brother, brother.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

## ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—*Palace.*

OLUPH. *Scated behind are EINSTEIN and SKALD.*

*Oluph.* Expended are my efforts ; they recoil  
 Upon me blightingly. Like Odin's hounds,  
 Choice with endowment of the sharpest sense,  
 Were those whom I out-sent. Profitless home  
 Hope-stifling, they return. The gods have set  
 The seal of mystery round this death about.  
 But why ? For what dread meaning have they wrapt  
 Th' assassination and assassin in  
 This mail of thickest clouds. Ye deities  
 That walk upon yon stars, far hearers, list  
 And give me answer. Wherefore must my honor,  
 My aspirations and delights, my fame  
 Displac'd by insupportable disgrace,  
 These feed the altars of your mysteries ?  
 Injustice ! is't the flame that lights your glory ?  
 From the vile creatures of the land pluck forth  
 Your victims, if ye must have innocents ;  
 But me ! I own myself ambition,—such  
 As gained ye Heav'n they say : not upon me  
 Shoot your empoison'd arrows. By all glory !  
 I feel temptation working by my side  
 To fall far from ye.

*Einstein.* O my lord, my master,  
 Threats do not move the gods !

*Oluph.* Let them be just,  
 Nor crush me thus unconseious of misdeed.

*Einstein.* What is 't you ask ?

*Oluph.* To know where lurketh he  
 Who my great sire foredid. Throughout the realms  
 Successless I have messenger'd in search ;

Search unrepaid and vengeance. To be man,  
 This punishes enough ; but surplus grief  
 Men call, some deem me — Heav'n-despited me !—  
 My father's murderer. Are the gods blind ?

*Skald.* Deep sink your plaints and heavily in my heart,  
 Unveiling most unwonted feeling  
 Sprung from much-moving cause.

Deign to my secret soul, O sire, impart  
 What new affliction now your spirit gnaws :  
 The wounds at mind I have some art in healing.

*Oluph.* Misguiding treasonous sleep ! My adored wife,  
 —Whose dearest affection has been as the words  
 That charm the hostile weapons in encounter —  
 Slumbering, spake her doubts : “ O Freya, say,  
 Did Oluph murder him ? ” Earth, earth and sea !  
 O God in thunder, hath it rolled thus far ?

*Skald.* Sleep hath a soul, a stranger soul,  
 The soul of sleep a voice  
 And fancies wild ;

But sightless and dark those thoughts ever roll,  
 Life folly they speak or the drunkard's rejoice ;  
 Be not by such beguiled.

*Oluph.* I will not censure her ; nor love her less.  
 There live magicians who do name themselves  
 The trump of Heaven's command. May it be true ?  
 Have they that knowledge I do famish for ?

*Skald.* O Oluph ! Thorstein, of the wooded isle,  
 Hath high and dread repute among mankind,  
 And blessing with the gods. Upon our rocks  
 Those high and magic characters divine,  
 Which common gazers know not to interpret,  
 Do answer to his questions. Hie to him ;  
 The buried past and unborn things of time  
 Will speak to you through him. My counsel, prince.

*Oluph.* Has he the gift of beneficial truth ?  
 Is the magician worthy of my prayer,  
 Or crafty in delusion, and too apt  
 For vulgar wonder ? Whether ?—I do fear it.

*Einstein.* O king, his deeds do spurn at misbelief ;  
 Starts into proof his power at every test.

But I beseech ye—and may these white hairs  
 Persuasive motives be—approach him not:  
 'Tis dangerous knowledge which to all beside  
 Is hidden and forbid. Beware of him.  
 There is a curse in all his uttered truth.  
 The insight of the future, or those pasts  
 Heaven-clouded, dizzies even the searcher's brain  
 And sickens life.

*Oluph.* Wisdom speaks in thy voice;  
 But there are times when caution fails to cure  
 And danger's well to seek. Uncommon paths  
 Nature herself doth oftentimes attempt,  
 Puzzling the wonder-touched beholders.

*Skald.* True;  
 Ee'n thus, O king, strike out no trodden way  
 From your much menaced, all-unfastened place.  
 Hasten! let no delay advantage foes  
 Too mighty now. Hearken, and I am silent.  
 Your father honored him.

*Oluph.* And this determines.

*Enter ALP and SIGURD.*

*Sigurd.* My lord, behold!

*Alp.* This casement gives the sight.

*Oluph.* What may be seen?

*Sigurd.* Communicating fires,  
 To tell of Denmark's landing on our coasts.

*Alp.* See, faintly there—see there—see boldly here.

*Oluph.* Then truly, enemies tread Norwegian grounds.

*Sigurd.* Few are as yet assembled for defence,  
 But never fear the faintness in the people.

If not for yours, foul dastards for their own  
 Most necessary safety they will rise.

*Oluph.* A fiery vigor I will straightway use  
 To bring their numbers out. Ere many suns  
 We must set forward. Faithful Alp, at once  
 Go plant our standard at the several gates.

*Alp.* Thanks for the task; it shall be soon fulfilled. [*Exit ALP.*]

*Oluph.* Could I but lead toward the battle ground  
 An army like my first, all would be well

And this descent most happy ; for the war  
 Would banish these sloth-aided phantasies  
 That taint my welfare. O ye gods on high,  
 How would my heart have danced before those fires,  
 Its fires had ye not quenched, its glorious joy  
 In the dear din of honorable strife ;  
 With the fell flood of desolation quenched,  
 And blackened all to cinder.

*Sigurd.* O my lord,  
 Let hope relume that heart.  
*Oluph* Can hope dash hence  
 Remembrance ?

*Enter ALSIFA.*

*Alsifa.* O tell me, royal husband, why those fires ?  
 Are they the scout and pioneer of war ?

*Oluph.* Ay, for our foes tread earth. Sweet Alsifa,  
 We must go forth your praises to deserve.  
 Your eye speaks sorrow that our enemies  
 At such a crippled time can call us forth.

*Alsifa.* 'Tis my regret indeed; yet so I own  
 Reliance on thy might and battle strength,  
 That I dread no defeat.—But, father, why  
 Let memory of these sons wear at your heart  
 Or prey upon content.

*Sigurd.* Can I forget them ?  
 Let slaves resign their proper indignation.  
 What ! to be vilely handled and maltreat,  
 By our own weapons stol'n, spurned from our door  
 In age and sorrows,—these to be forgiven ?  
 'Twould teach all sons rebellion.

*Alsifa.* Time will come,  
 And they will kneel to your redeemed estate.

*Sigurd.* I loved them always too, not as thyself,  
 But still with an affection which their weal  
 Saw far above mine own.

*Alsifa.* Turn thee to me,  
 And find some solace in my warm devotion,  
 As child e'er breathed.

*Oluph.* Lord Sigurd, I have learned,

That your revolted sons among themselves  
Dissentious, lure their proper scourge.

*Sigurd.* The gods  
Be praised for some remembrance of my loss.  
Where is our Rolf. Come, we will seek him, daughter,  
And tell th' approaching war.

*Alsifa.* Let us do this.

[*Exeunt SIGURD and ALSIFA.*]

*Oluph.* Know'st thou the dwelling-isle of this magician ?

*Einstein.* I do, my lord.

*Oluph.* Accompany me thither.  
No farther can my down-thrown fortunes fall;  
What then to fear or fly from ? Follow me. [ *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An open place near the Palace.*

*Enter GUDRUDE in a mean guise.*

*Gudrude.* Thus am I taught that evil to itself  
Is dang'rous, more than to all chosen objects ;  
Thus do I learn to hate the instruments  
I wielded ere my fall. My father's fate  
Hath now become mine own. Wounded and spurned,  
No kindly roof to shelter from th' assault  
Of angry elements.—But no, not his ;  
He from pernicious sons, in his time's weakness,  
All undeserving,—I most meriting,  
Turned forth to winter's face or charity.  
Nothing is chastisement for my offence,  
But all the wrath of Heaven weak, too poor.  
What comes this way ? My father in his sadness,  
With eye and step bespeaking thoughtful mind,  
E'en to the quick alive with sense of wrong.

*Enter SIGURD.*

*Sigurd.* The skies seem angry, and their blacken'd brow  
Bulwark of ire must break upon us soon.  
—How, sirrah ? would'st thou speak with me ? Be quick.



*Guðrude.* I've fallen upon calamity, my lord,  
And am emboldened to request a boon.

*Sigurd.* What boon ?

*Guðrude.* Employment at your hands.

*Sigurd.* Away!

Bold fellow, get thee gone ! thou art suborned  
To do me mischief.

*Guðrude.* Well, my lord. 'Twas said,  
That you could pity wretchedness. 'Tis seen.

*Sigurd.* Men hold no faith to Sigurd ; thou perforce  
Would'st turn another traitor.

*Guðrude.* I have feeling  
For stricken nobleness.

*Sigurd.* What can'st thou be ?

*Guðrude.* A soldier's follower, true for ever.

*Sigurd.* No ;

I will not thy attendance.

*Guðrude.* Well, well, well ;  
And were you e'er suspectful ? This it was  
Lost ye perhaps your station.

*Sigurd.* No ; ne'er man  
More giv'n to trust the countenance, than myself.

*Guðrude.* Your armor I will burnish, and put heads  
Pointed as icy pendants, to your spears ;  
Stand ready with your halbert in the hour ;  
Love and caress your steed ; and in harsh times,  
When famine hath set in, wring from proud hands  
Supplies ;—

*Sigurd.* There is a leaning in my heart  
Toward thy wish which looks like good intent.  
Follow me ; be but faithful, I'm content.

*Guðrude.* Thanks ; may the gods but be so faithful half  
As I shall ever. Lean on me.

*Sigurd.* This way. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*An island; rugged and obscure spot thereon. In the back-ground a huge rock, thorough-hewn with strange characters. A fire.—Thunder.*

THORSTEIN.

Not vainly have I toiled. There goeth abroad  
 The soul of slaughter, and disease, and crime;  
 Peace is effrayed, and in the quietest house  
 Starts out the brother's sword; in still repose  
 His sire the son doth stifle; noiseless ereeps  
 The wife with horrid steel, while fondled youth  
 Drops poison in the eup; unconsciously  
 With villany hand in hand virtue conspires.  
 These things fore-doomed, fore-known, come now to pass.  
 —Thrones tremble; kings, more wretched than the worst,  
 Who pitiably buy life, ery out on death.  
 'Tis awful, but 'tis gladsome to that spirit  
 Which is beyond the nature of these base.  
 —What moves this way? The step of royalty;  
 She comes; a nature like mine own, not boasting  
 A kindred feeling with the multitudes.

*Enter ASGILDA.*

High-born, all hail!

*Asgilda.* O prince of mysteries,  
 Who thriddest those dark narrows of dread fate,  
 Whose darkness only we behold and shake,—  
 Give me the knowledge that I crave.

*Thorstein.* I know  
 The longing that hath led thee; thy desire  
 Shall meet my smile. But hither comes another  
 Bent to the same demand. Once to the twain,  
 Answer shall spoken be.

*Asgilda.* Who is that other?

*Thorstein.* Wait silently.

*Asgilda.* Tell me; your might is great,  
 But I have aided potently ere now,  
 The power whose speech I pant for; say.

*Thorstein.* Behold! [*ASGILDA retires.*]

*Enter OLUPH.*

*Oluph.* I know thee to be Thorstein; chieftaincy  
And high attainment in the art, is writ  
On the bold brow of thee. 'Tis whom I seek.

*Thorstein.* Welcome, thou sovereign of an hour, and hail!

*Oluph.* By mysteries and darkness, by you sky  
That the wild thunder troubles, by the hour  
That aids ye in your searchings, by all things  
Which minister the power that ye do want,  
And by the light within ye, and the Heaven  
To which that light belongs to quench or nourish,—  
Tell me what hand unhallowed murder'd him  
From whom I sprung.

*Thorstein.* And when you hear his name—

*Oluph.* Instruct me where he dwelleth.

*Thorstein.* Would ye slay?

*Oluph.* Swift as the wind, more eager than the flame  
I'd be upon him.

*Thorstein.* Then avoid this place;  
Get to some cave and crouch from treacherous day,  
And man's discovering mind; forego all joys  
That wait on motion and companionship;  
E'en in the tomb impenetrable seek  
The ignorance of death; for this to know  
Which ye demand of us is poison's worst.

*Oluph.* Answer to me, else may your dangerous craft  
Your sorcerous arts be ruin on your head.

*Thorstein.* Be wise, O prince.

*Oluph.* Reply to me, O wizard,  
Ere I put forth mine own supremacy,  
And sweep thee and thy partners from the land;  
Ay, every vestige of the art uproot  
In these dominions, and with foul disgrace  
Pursue your name.

*Thorstein.* Beware mine ire, rash prince.

*Oluph.* I dare it and defy thee to make known  
This murderer of a king.

*Thorstein.* Brave not your fate.

*Oluph.* Thine own is solely peril'd.

*Thorstein.* Hearken, tremble:

It was your hand that slew your royal parent.

*Oluph.* Miscreant, is this thy art ?

*Thorstein.* Hence with the sword !

One word of mine can hurl thee in the waters,  
Never to re-appear.

*Oluph.* Time is misspent,  
But I once more thy boasted knowledge task.

Where is the old companion of my sire,  
Who journeyed with him in his last outgoing ?

*Thorstein.* E'en in your palace Einstein with ye dwells ;  
Hourly he meets your eye, and from his tongue  
Drops ever in your ear his wisest knowledge.

*Oluph.* I leave thee ; bootless is all question held  
With arrogating ignorance like thine.

Fool, do my subjects deign to give thee fame  
By thy unmeaning accents to be swayed,  
Before thee as a prophet to bow down ?  
Impostor, I depart from thee, but shall  
These thy revilings well remember.

*Thorstein.* Prince,  
Arrest thee ; thou shalt hear truth unbesought.  
Detested by thy subjects, on the field  
Betrayed, o'erthrown by foreign foemen, driven  
From company of goodness, most debased,  
Thy only death-hour shall be happiness.

*Oluph.* False prophet hast thou ended ?

*Thorstein.* Ay. [Exit OLUPH.  
Lady, thou hast been answered.

*Asgilda.* His the deed ?  
Terrible gods, how may this be believed ?

*Thorstein.* It shall not be gainsayed. He is the doer.

*Asgilda.* I'd sell the after-world to know this true.

*Thorstein.* Why suffer doubt ? Our art partakes thy faith.  
If still incertain, Einstein will approve.

*Asgilda.* It is the dearest, best beloved word  
Dropped ever on mine ear. Farewell ! My guards  
Wait for me restless. Thanks for your impartments. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—*Palace.*

OLUPH, EINSTEIN,—SKALD.

*Oluph.* Call, call to me my spouse, dear Alsifa. [*Exit SKALD.*]*Einstein.* Did I not counsel rightly, well-loved master?*Oluph.* Thy cautions were not ill: would I had heeded.*Enter ALSIFA.**Alsifa.* My lord, mine Oluph, happy is my heart  
Thy call to answer, Wherefore am I bid?*Oluph.* 'Tis that I may rejoice me in thy aspect  
In the skilled ministry of thy sweet smile,  
When the wide frown of accident and time  
Is bended 'gainst me. Long as thou art to me,——*Alsifa.* For ever!*Oluph.* Thy love my home, when the true sov'reign's home  
Heart of his people is abruptly closed,  
To hope will I still cling, with hope still walk  
The narrow path o'erlung.*Alsifa.* O then regard not  
Their malice or delusion.—Strikes mine ear  
The ceaseless din of warlike preparation.*Oluph.* Yet 'tis a feeble and unwilling force  
That follows me outgoing.*Alsifa.* Hop'st thou then  
For victory?*Oluph.* Nor that, nor fear defeat.  
The gods of battle are my only trust,  
Man is but little else than perfidy,——*Enter ASGILDA.*

The noble lady of my sire.

*Asgilda.* That sire  
Was one who loved thee well.*Oluph.* Do I forget it?*Asgilda.* His death was murder; is it yet avenged?*Oluph.* Thou know'st how thoroughly were ransacked these  
His left dominions for the traitor.*Asgilda.* Vainly?

*Oluph.* Thou sayest.

*Alsifa.* Why, lady, ask ye these well knowing?  
Is it to rend anew the grievous heart-wounds?  
When scorpion memory sleeps, it seems unkind  
To stir it into wakefulness.

*Asgilda.* Proud child  
Of a degraded earl, 'tis not for thee  
To overbear the majesty of birth.  
No! though thy place be now above mine own,  
'Tis idle in thy tongue to scoff at me.

*Alsifa.* I am most silent.

*Oluph.* Thou wert spouse of one  
Most wise and good; he honored thee, we him;  
But we require thy courtesy to our queen  
Unbroken, faultless, else thy presence ne'er.

*Asgilda.* Thou shalt have soon a calling high'r than that  
Of salving woman's pride. Would'st thou behold  
A fellow journeyer with the slaughter'd king  
In his last hour.

*Oluph.* How can I buy this sight?

*Asgilda.* Perchance though easily, dearly. But indeed  
Would'st thou desire it? Answer not, my lord;  
The word is nothing, but the heart, the heart!  
How Oluph is it with thine?

*Oluph.* Why, why is this?  
Show me the purpose of your strangest speech.

*Asgilda.* He was not all unloved. The prayer of one  
To whom the memory elings as his to me,  
May win the very elements to join  
And wreak their maddening vengeance on the head  
Of a destroyer. Thou tremblest! Why is this?  
Know you, fair lady, wherefore?

*Alsifa.* Nay, even I  
Shake to behold your strange demeanor.

*Oluph.* Bold  
And haught you gaze upon me. What may be  
The motives of this passion which runs wild  
Through eye, through form to utterance?

*Asgilda.* Think'st thou that power, tongue-purchase or the  
night,

Protect ungodly deeds.

*Alsifa.* She raves, my lord ;

Beware some sudden act of frenzy.

*Asgilda.* Ha!—

Think'st thou because the victim's tongue be dumb,  
That doom shall have no voice ? Come hither, thou !

What is this personage ?

*Oluph.* Mine honored bard.

*Asgilda.* Remove this guise, this silvery beard, and lo !  
Needless shall farther search for Einstein be.

*Oluph.* Who art thou ?

*Einstein.* O, my lord !

*Oluph.* And thou art he.

*Asgilda.* Can'st thou make dull divinity's stern eye ?

Tremble ! into thy dead heart shrink. 'This deed,

Dismal of hue, shall be uncurtained, bared ;

Horror in every bosom ; and the wrath

Of a dishonor'd nation shall requite

With terror and destruction thy misdeed.

Wo to thee !

[*Exit* ASGILDA.]

*Oluph.* My wife.

*Alsifa.* What say'st ?

*Oluph.* Her senses are undone

By a most desperate grief.

*Alsifa.* I think it not ;

Hatred and dark design possess her breast.

Having such power t'empoison other minds,

Wilt thou her freedom still allow ?

*Oluph.* My sire

Did honor her.—And Einstein ! Day and day

I'm farther bound in strangeness, and the air

That winds do play with is not more unfixed

Than is my judgment. Say,—thou witnessedst

My father's death ? How fell he, and who slew him ?

No answer ? Speak. 'Twere better and more safe

At once to yield reply.

*Alsifa.* He wrings his hands,

And messengers of sorrow seem to start

From his eye time-bedimmed.

*Oluph.* Friend of my parent,

Follow me; and unburthen thy charged soul.

*Alsifa.* O Heav'n, where is thy aid!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Seat of Drontheim.*

GULDHARALD. ADELSTEIN.

*Guldharald.* There is disgrace in it. What! a fair sister  
Spouse of your foe?

*Adelstein.* Truly, I would 'twere not.

*Guldharald.* Of one who reached the crown with bloody palm?

*Adelstein.* Well! but we deem that slight importing.

*Guldharald.* One

Leagued with your father; whom he has beside  
Sworn to restate when better strength approves.

*Adelstein.* His words contemned me too when I foretold  
Impending all. To do this robbery—

*Guldharald.* Harsh term; she is thy kin: to liberate her,—

*Adelstein.* Would wound him deeply and enrich our palace.  
'Tis her enlivening smile will cheer our gloom  
And solitude, which weightier seems each day.

*Guldharald.* Th' emprise is easy. In th' unwatchful night,  
He in the wars away, it were no task  
With soldiery to force a sudden path  
Full in the palace and recapture her.  
Hakon will not molest; our better friend.

*Adelstein.* We make the effort then.

*Guldharald.* Success past doubt,

Ay, past all hindrance must attend the stroke,  
If energy go with it.

*Adelstein.* Say no more,—

Are you informed how wrathful are our subjects  
That we are not companion in these wars?

*Guldharald.* They are the fools contrariness makes sport of;  
Commandment to the wars had found them loth  
And fixedly reluctiant as the rest  
In all the land; and now they dare to mourn  
And murmur 'gainst their quiet. 'Twas but wrong



To ease their tributes when we took the rule.

*Adelstein.* Well, well; do you rest here?

*Guldharald.*

Ay, Adelstein.

[*Exit* ADELSTEIN.]

An easy mate, and sufferable awhile  
That he is useful to my close designs.  
Alsifa with us, apprehension sleeps;  
The path then broad before me, and my sight  
Piercing through time and difficulty, naught  
Can frustrate. Happy spirit of boldness! What,  
What may be likened unto thee, save gods,  
Thee ever fortunate and mightiest?  
—Two obstacles in Oluph and her brother  
Did seem to live; but that by Hakon's malice  
The first shall fall, I'm perfect in conviction;—  
And for the other, he is in my hand  
To feed the tomb at time's requirement. Then  
I shall have vengeance dear and sweet enough,  
For his most bitter scorn.

[*Exit.*]

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SCENE VI.—*Palace.*

ASGILDA. EINSTEIN *seated in a thoughtful position.*

*Asgilda.* Think well of it. To me though you deny  
This secret to unfold, yet to the world  
Know that your life attacks th' unrobing word.  
Choice is entombed, save this: him to accuse,  
His guilt, his monster-crime to picture forth  
With memory's vivid testimony; else  
To be yourself enburthened with the deed.

*Einstein.* Impossible!

*Asgilda.* 'Tis not, for your mute keeping  
Inculpates and misdoubts you in their thoughts  
Who saw ye journey at his perilled side.

*Einstein.* Father of gods and men! Enlight my path  
In pity of my sorrow-battled years.

*Asgilda.* Two ways outstretch before ye, and as sways

Folly or wisdom most, you lose or live:  
The safety-rayonned lamp of honor sheds  
Far-reaching beams in one; the other road  
Is short and sudden, deathward.

*Einstein.*

God of realms!

*Asgilda.* Why call ye on your gods? Do not belie  
The goodly-shining judgment of your age.

*Enter OLUPH, ALSIFA, SIGURD.*

*Oluph.* Repent not that you granted me this boon;  
Why should you brave war's rugged look and fierce?

*Alsifa.* To be with thee. 'Tis in the direst hour  
And where distraction revels that the soul  
Of amity most gladdens, best is proved.  
But thou requirest not.

*Sigurd.*

Still thy desire.

Ill could I suffer freedom from the toils  
And glorious hazard of the coming time,  
Wert thou abroad, my child.

*Oluph.*

In your consent

Prevails this excellence; it wins your sire  
To brook the—else uncheered and desolate—hall  
When all are battling. Einstein!—Here is one  
Unworthily and strangely who keeps locked,  
E'en from our authorized request, that note  
So sought through all the people. Here await  
Our re-appearance from the wars; compelled  
Thou shalt be to deliver up the secret  
Of that fell deed whence sprung our bitter woes.  
If vainly we demand, thy life shall be  
Atonement; guiltiness is imaged in  
Thy all-unmoving silence.—Noble Alp,

*Enter ALP.*

Are all the bands due ordered for the march?  
If so, with urgent pace we will set on.

*Alp.* My lord, I have stern tidings. Fell revolt  
Breathes in the soldiery; their planted feet  
They shall not stir, until——

*Oluph.*

Until assured

Of honor in their captain.

*Alp.* 'Tis their cry.

Prince Hakon they exclaim for, and meseems  
No easy insurrection to be quell'd.

*Alsifa.* Alas!

*Sigurd.* O faithless slaves!

*Oluph.* Fear nothing, friends;

Follow me, Alp.

[Exit with ALP.]

*Sigurd.* Giddy, disserving subjects!

*Asgilda.* You ere to blame, affixing odious terms  
On bold and wrong-withstanding men.

*Sigurd.* Thou knowest

That none more honors in our countrymen,  
Becoming boldness and that hardy nature  
To outrage unsubmissive. But I hate,  
When guile and nimble-creeping subtlety  
Sway them to vicious routes.

*Alsifa.* The clamors cease,

And Alp returns. How left you them, good lord ?

*Re-enter ALP.*

*Alp.* Stilled and compliant. Salutations fierce,  
Ferocious gave they him; but much availed  
His eloquence which chastened and subdued.  
When with a solemn promise he had bound him  
To meet them at the great Yule-feast, and there  
To expiate the murder of our king,  
Or by th' offender's death, or by his own,  
Straightway they rendered to his guidance.

*Alsifa.* Ah!

And hath he gone ?

*Alp.* The parting had but grieved;  
More dear the meeting.

*Alsifa.* Said'st thou—O ye gods!—  
Himself? His innocent, his royal blood,  
Flow in atonement ?

*Alp.* Murder unatoned  
By victim or by culprit, on the realm  
Draws all the wrath of Heaven.—E'en the gods  
Might envy such a virtue as in this

He wills to show mankind.

*Sigurd.* No, Alsifa;  
The guilty shall be brought before that day  
To the avenging light. Come with me, come  
And let us sorrowfully interchange  
Our story and sweet sympathy. O come.

*Alp.* I must now haste to the way-winning army.  
Farewell to all!

*Sigurd.* Farewell!

*Alsifa.* Peace with Lord Alp.

[*Exeunt SIGURD, ALSIFA, ALP.*]

*Asgilda.* Get thee hence now, and ponder well what course,  
Which of the twain—wisdom could never halt  
At such a choice—thou wilt resolve upon,  
Death or thy duty.

*Einstein.* Be the hour accursed  
I turned my fatal steps to this abode.  
O faulty, blinded judgment!

*Asgilda.* 'Twas the gods,  
Who overrule our feebler purposes.

[*Exit EINSTEIN and ASGILDA.*]

SCENE VII.—*Darkened interior of a hut. SWENO, sitting thoughtfully in the back part.*

*Enter EINSTEIN.*

*Einstein.* O solitary place, which wak'st in me  
Remembrance of sweet pleasure and fond hope,  
Brightness of long-lost days, to greet thee thus,  
—Forlorn old man and lone on earth,—was ne'er  
The forecast of this mind! Thou, thou, O son!  
Who would'st have been dear balm and compensation  
For any measure of affliction, thou  
Could'st offly be bereft me.

*Sweno.* 'Tis my father.  
Thanked be the gods for his good custody!

*Einstein.* 'Twas hard that in my sorrow's very crisis

Death should despoil me there where dwelt the hope  
Of solace to be found in after-days.

*Sweno.* Old man, rejoice; thy son is of the living.

*Einstein.* Ha, Sweno! and not dead? O let me look  
Upon those features cherished.

There is no misery more, but all is joy.

Wherefore gave they me anguish with deceit?

Joy, joy abound at heart.

*Sweno.* In shameful battle  
I was o'erthrown and hither senseless borne,  
By all deemed slain. I swore my slaves to silence;  
For life with this abhorred disgrace is more  
Than any plotted death. And now repay  
My narrative with thine.

*Einstein.* Where is the smile  
Whose home was once upon thy aspect e'er?  
Tell me.

*Sweno.* Tell me, who slew the king?

*Einstein.* No, never;  
Why ask'st thou this?

*Sweno.* Whether I live or die  
Rests on discovery of the murderer.  
If he was Oluph, I will live; no shame  
Will be my portion from this contest then.  
If Oluph was not guilty, I shall die  
By my degraded sword to which the gods  
Denied success, though helped by righteous cause.  
Whose deed it was, declare thou who canst only.

*Einstein.* O do not ask to die.

*Sweno.* Then it was Oluph's?

*Einstein.* 'Tis false, the prince is innocent.

*Sweno.* Then death.

*Einstein.* No, thou must live while I do own existence.

*Sweno.* I am most firm. Nothing can make life sweet,  
Save public confirmation of the crime  
Charged on the king: one whom I reverence,  
But less than honor.

*Einstein.* Then we die together.  
Falseness shall never issue from my mouth  
'To Oluph's injury.

*Sweno.* Must it be falsehood?  
 It seemed as if the Odin-judgment strengthened  
 The arm of Metzalong, and I did feel  
 The curse of cause unjust to weigh my steel  
 And bring me to the dust. I swear my death  
 This sunset if no hope arises.

*Einstein.* Die  
 Thou shalt not. What is unto me a son,  
 Beside thee. Though I bring all desolation  
 Upon mankind I'll save thee, and we'll live  
 Long seasons joyous each in the other.

*Sweno.* Thanks;  
 Blessings of goodness be upon thee ever.

*Einstein.* Come to the temple of the mighty Thor,  
 When celebrated is the feast, and Sweno,  
 Thou shalt have words of life.

*Sweno.* But why such haste?

*Einstein.* The palace is my prison. To revisit  
 This home, remembrancer of other days  
 Was granted for a space most brief. Farewell!

*Sweno.* Farewell, my father!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Antichamber in the Palace.**Enter SIGURD and GUDRUDE.*

*Sigurd.* I scarce know wherefore thou dost bring me hither  
To watch beside my daughter's chamber.

*Gudrude.* 'Tis  
Her safety which to be assailed this night  
I greatly fear. Whisperings smite mine ear  
And give me this alarm.

*Sigurd.* Too strict is ne'er  
For such a treasure, caution. Lie thou down;  
From wall to wall, through the night's thoughtful hours,  
I will pace away.

*Gudrude.* I will rest me here,  
Here by this threshold stretched till villain's stride  
Cry me awake.

*Sigurd.* Rest then, my best of friends,  
And be thou happy in thy slumberings.  
—The melancholy of my soul swells highest  
But not unkindest in the still of night.  
(*At a casement.*) The stars are multitudinous to the eye,  
Yet unconfused; free in obedience,  
Duteous in freedom; no revoltings there,  
No fallings off nor wrathful crash of foes,  
Dissunderings of neighborly sweet ties,  
Nor aught but silent-seeming peace. O Thou!  
Whose harmonizing hand hath lit up space  
With these bepraising wonders, wherefore shape  
Our race apportion'd and implanted with  
The ever-poisoning seed of conflict, seed  
Whose working harrows and distains the soil  
While outwardly it strikes. O trait'rous sons!  
Little they deem how elings and lingers here

Their shafted warfare. Lamentable crime!

*Gudrude.* Oh! Oh!

*Sigurd.* Groan'st thou compassionate? Sleep, sleep, good fellow.

Gods! let that ~~throne~~ ascend the Heavens and woo ye  
To my one simple prayer: Justice or Death,  
Right me and visit on that high-clomb fiend  
Who wrought my sons to treason, me to mis'ry,  
Their evil journey, so in peace I may  
Go down to slumber; or in violent pity  
Loosen me hence at once.

*Gudrude.* Hark! hear you not  
An echo-stifling tread?

*Sigurd.* Ha!—no, 'twas naught;  
The wind is high and moves with murmur. Rest thee.  
And they, dare they remember? and the years  
Of fatherly—But truly there is stealth  
Of hither-tending steps.

*Enter ADELSTEIN, with a band of soldiers.*

*Adelstein.* 'Tis the queen's chamber. Here arrest ye all  
Until I issue. (*GUDRUDE opposes.*)

What art thou? Base watch  
Regard thy safety. Hence!

*Sigurd.* It is my son.  
Traitor, what dost thou here?

*Adelstein.* I seek to save  
From th' evil fate thou gav'st, my well-loved sister.

*Sigurd.* Detested robber, com'st thou dastardly  
In coward's night to steal—

*Adelstein.* Stifle their voices;  
Restrain them while I enter.

*Gudrude.* First, thou'lt die.

*Enter ALSIFA.*

*Alsifa.* O Heaven! what means this tumult?

*Adelstein.* I am here,  
I your dear brother, here from this vile house  
Attainted and devoted, you to bear  
To a more honor'd dwelling-place, our home.



*Sigurd.* Thou blackener of all goodness,—  
*Alsifa.* O, my father!  
 Save me for thine—for mine—for Oluph's sake!  
*Gudrude.* This theft is your destruction. Shall the king  
 Pardon? Or will revenge slumber?  
*Adelstein.* That voice—  
 But come. [*Seizes ALSIFA's hand, and exeunt with soldiers.*]  
*Sigurd.* Shall we pursue, brave fellow?  
*Gudrude.* To the death. [*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE II.—*Chambers of Asgilda.*

HAKON. ASGILDA.

*Asgilda.* With all these witnesses that sound like truth  
 'Tis yet most difficult to image him  
 The guilty of this deed. It braves belief.

*Hakon.* Not with my mind. The testimony conquers  
 All doubt whate'er.

*Asgilda.* What matters t' us opinion?  
 His name is darkened with ill fame; ere long  
 The night of death shall swallow fame and name.  
 The tidings of this conflict linger long;  
 They must have met ere this. I fear, I fear  
 Victorious Erick. Bending all our might  
 To his destruction, Oluph's, we have ta'en  
 For th' adversary no precaution.

*Hakon.* Yes,  
 We are entrapped if Erick triumphs. Gods!  
 It were bemaddening.

*Asgilda.* Fear not in this hour.  
 Grateful our issues hitherto have been;  
 They teach us not to be down-cast by aught  
 Hereafter dangersome.

*Hakon.* We might have gained.  
 It must be told, be known; our all is lost  
 If Oluph be defeated. Blinded fools!  
 Why sacrifice to hatred? Why seduce

The nobles to betray him on the field?  
 Empoisoned point and hilt our weapons were.

*Asgilda.* What now?

*Hakon.* Your counsels were short-sighted; all  
 Through seeming fortune tend to our perdition.

*Asgilda.* Beware, my son; do not encher me,  
 I charge ye.

*Enter THORLEIF.*

Thorleif, bring ye tidings?

*Thorleif.* Such as I ween will not unwelcome prove.  
 The armies met at Agder; ere the fight  
 Your friendly nobles to th' opposing power  
 Passed o'er. The contest, you may know, was slight;  
 But fled perforce upon th' opening shock  
 Oluph's diminished band. Your gladden'd ears  
 Know all.

*Hakon.* Out, thou ill messenger, away!

*Thorleif.* How now, Prince Hakon? Shall I brook this  
 manner?

'Tis the event ye wished, and strove to compass.

*Hakon.* Begone, nor never speak to us again.

*Thorleif.* I shall, some day, but in another vein.

This for befriending traitors! I am taught. [*Exit THORLEIF.*]

*Asgilda.* What demon now misrules you to rash conduct  
 Of speech audacious? Is my son before me?  
 No, never son of mine in the trying time  
 Would fade from courage and an equal soul.  
 O Hakon, I ne'er knew a curse till thou  
 Forgott'st ambition and thy sworn revenge.  
 Is it to thee as naught the hurl of Oluph  
 Down to a hated grave? Whom did thy sire  
 Daily more honor than thyself, higher place  
 In banquets and assemblies? Who bore off  
 The maiden thou did'st sigh for vainly? Who  
 But thy step-brother Oluph? Is it little  
 To witness his downfalling? Glorious gods!  
 The sight were empire to mine eyes.

*Hakon.* O mother!  
 Vengeance is ours if not domain; we'll live

Not wholly idly, neither quite discomfit  
Go down to death. My sunken heart now swells  
With this sufficient hope; to wreak his doom.

*Enter MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Our forces, in a confused headlong flight,  
Are from the walls, in much inglorious haste,  
Now in full sight.

*Hakon.* To meet them I will forth.

*[Exit HAKON and MESSENGER.]*

*Asgilda.* With vengeance eased, regardless of all else!  
So am not I. 'Tis my all-daring heart  
Shall strike his upward path.

*[Exit.]*

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SCENE III.—*Open place near the seat of Drontheim.*

*Enter GUDRUDE and ROLFF.*

*Rolff.* My brother, ne'er could'st thou from me disguise  
Those deep-toned accents.

*Gudrude.* Feeble was my art;  
Yet will I bless thy ear's discernment, which  
Pardon accompanied.

*Rolff.* Oh, I respect  
Your virtuous mournings and your sincere woes,  
Much as I blame the cause thereof.

*Gudrude.* My brother!

*Rolff.* But where is now that so unhappy man,  
Our sorrow-tossed father?

*Gudrude.* By the gates  
That swung at his direction, times gone by,  
As wrath and anguish turn by turn prevail,  
Now storms he, now he lingers pensively.

*Rolff.* You left him?

*Gudrude.* With designs that touched his welfare.  
You know the postern portal which admits  
Or to the woods or castle?

*Rolff.* Surely, well.

*Gudrude.* I have the key hereof; it will befriend  
A second purpose. This and proper caution  
Gained me an entrance and discovered me  
These tidings. 'Gainst our brother's life, Guldharald  
Hath laid a cursed plot. With morrow's dawn  
They issue forth to hunt, in devious routes  
Asunder. In the bosom of the wood  
Attendants are to murder Adelstein.

*Rolff.* Great gods, above! this must not be.

*Gudrude.* Nor shall,  
If my best management encompass can  
These reaching ends. Meanwhile, good brother Rolff,  
Our father is in peril by those walls  
That are denied to him.

*Rolff.* Let us there seek him.

*Gudrude.* Most willingly. Still know me not as aught  
Save that I seem.

*Rolff.* I will assist your purpose. [ *Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Court before the Palace.*

*Enter HAKON and ALP.*

*Hakon.* Where is the king?

*Alp.* Now of the battlements  
He makes the circuit, fortifying all  
With sure defence of men. He mags the walls,  
Allots the watchmen posts, the gates secures,  
And with an all-providing eye he scans  
The face of danger.

*Hakon.* Useless all and vain  
Are these late measures. Tell me, Alp, how went,  
Describe me minutely the course that took  
This battle.

*Alp.* Prince, 'tis not the hour for this.  
Be it enough—some nobles, bound with you

In friendship, proved their treachery, and sold  
Their country to a havoc-bringing foe.  
Powerful is fraternal spleen.

*Hakon.* Lord Alp,  
Ponder your words in caution's scale hereafter;  
The careless hasty tongue is often rued.

*Enter OLUPH.*

King Oluph wears not such becoming pride  
As fits returning generals. Why such haste?  
No welcome from your lady's lips awaits ye.

*Oluph.* Where is my lady?

*Hakon.* Ay.

*Oluph.* My queen! where is she?

*Hakon.* To the more blest abode of her first years  
She has repaired, some days ere this.

*Oluph.* How? how?

Why went she hither?

*Hakon.* Wearied, 'tis believed,  
Of royal wedlock.

*Oluph.* What availeth now  
Wrath or bewail. Misfortune lacked this crown  
To make her power expressed.

*Alp.* My noble prince,  
'Tis muttered in the popular voice, that hence  
She went not willing; but by suffer'd force  
Was taken to her brother's domain.

*Oluph.* Where  
Is Sigurd?

*Hakon.* None have seen him latterly.

*Oluph.* Good Alp, delay not, but send straightway forth  
For the unhappy father.

*Alp.* Yes, my lord.

*Hakon.* To-morrow is the Yule-feast; in due course  
You will fulfil the vow, to expiate  
Atoning or otherwise before the world  
My father's vow.

*Oluph.* I took it solemnly;  
And sacredly will I maintain my word.  
Leave me; your presence is an irksomeness.  
The death is nothing, but the heinous wrong

[*Exit HAKON.*]

Inflicted here by honor-tainting breath !  
 Could I shake off these slander-fasten'd darts  
 Before departure, I might go in peace ;  
 But in the tomb to bear them still prolongs  
 Life's misery.

*Enter* EINSTEIN.

*Einstein.* My lord—

*Oluph.* Ah, Einstein ! hast thou wrought thy mind  
 To goodness and a better reason ? Say,  
 Wilt thou to-morrow ease thy laden soul  
 Of its dark knowledge ?

*Einstein.* I am old and worn,  
 Past service and all-useless to the world.  
 Here is my bosom proffered to thy blade ;  
 Strike, strike, and save a needful, precious life.

*Oluph.* And is the guilty noble, and his life  
 Out-valuing thine own ? It must ne'er be,  
 The culpable shall suffer, else my love  
 Of a dearest father shall o'erclouded be,  
 And champion counter-thought. Thy motives, sure,  
 Are virtuous as the aspect of thy years ;  
 But think it well, old man, death acquits death,  
 And let thy finger point to me the one  
 To-morrow's night before the herd of man,  
 That thou and I exist ; else thee and me  
 The doom will take in hand. My vow compels  
 Me to depart from earth, the dull world's doubt  
 Thee,—ill-name thereon left.

*Einstein.* O, dear to me  
 Is the misdoer, dying in my voice.

*Oluph.* Greater the virtue, loosening thy tongue.

*Einstein.* Be it enough.

*Oluph.* Thou wilt ?

*Einstein.* I will ; and die.

*Oluph.* But hold ; an oath bears on us to produce  
 Him the destroyer, to the people's sight.  
 All 's vain, if he appear not.

*Einstein.* He shall come. [*Exit* EINSTEIN.

*Oluph.* Now I can give my thoughts to range awhile.

Alsifa stolen from me! Ha! is't real?  
 Belief scarce grasps it. Dares my thought to doubt  
 Her sweet fidelity? And yet no force  
 Would be so haught and rash as to o'erleap  
 The hazard of such sacrilege. Her brother!  
 Cares he for her who knew no father-love?  
 The miserable parent I must see  
 And with him counsel of the fittest course.

[Exit.

## SCENE V.—A glade.

*Enter SIGURD, GUDRUDE and ROLFF.**Sigurd.* Has the sun sprung yet?*Rolff.* See, 'tis almost risen.

*Sigurd.* I rather think 'tis up, and yon low cloud  
 The muffler and base hindrance of its beams.  
 Good fellow, is't about the time?

*Gudrude.* It is.

You soon will hear them.

*Sigurd.* What a wondrous sea

Is wickedness. Th' adventurer more far  
 Each reckless billow tosses from all goodness,  
 More deep in 'scapeless misery.

*Rolff.* O father!

How have these griefs invaded heart and health!

*Sigurd.* 'Tis true; winters are kinder than these sorrows,  
 And rob us less. But little can I lose  
 Ere Odin's promised festal halls are gained.  
 Villain Gukdharald! thou, for whom my house  
 I made a refuge; whom e'en as my child  
 I cherished and befriended; thou—a wolf  
 A pard, blood-pamper'd and inobligate,  
 Would have entreaused better reverence—  
 Hast fixed thy desperate talons in my heart  
 By piecemeal tearing joys and gentler hopes!  
 How can thy death atone? but thou shalt die,

Nice-worker of worst villany, instiller  
Of evil in my offspring's heart.

*Guadrude.* My lord,  
A bold and perilling purpose 'tis you hold.  
Should the enforcement take a flaw from chance,  
Destruction will light on your head.

*Sigurd.* 'Tis true ;  
My latest hour this may well prove. What then ?  
For the salvation of my child to die  
Is nothing. For my Alsifa ? Ha, ha !  
Struck be the hawk, and she my dearest young  
Delivered ; then what matter if his guards  
Fall on and slay us ?

*Rolff.* Let them come !

*Guadrude.* Ay, come !  
To die together is some blessing still.

*Sigurd.* Good yeoman, best of servants,—hark, the flourish !  
The hunters issue. See, they are not distant. [*Cornets sounded.*]

*Guadrude.* Here in this favoring thicket, till they come  
Let us with stillness hide.

*Sigurd.* Hasten we thither. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter GULDHARALD, ADELSTEIN, ALSIFA, HUNTSMEN.*

*Guldharald.* Lady, the sun shines cheerly, and the morn  
With airy visitations gentle-kind,  
Sweet looks doth challenge and th' enlightening smile ;  
Behold the earth frore-coated, and the sky  
Unruffled aught, the sport so coy-delayed,  
Your best of friends about you, and why still  
Lingers the beaming pleasure of your eye ?

*Adelstein.* A dull forebidding t'ward this mate begins  
To creep within my mind. Dares he to love  
My 'spousal'd sister ? Better he were dead.—

*Alsifa.* Ah me ! how weighty with new-added fears,  
How sore with perishing of hopes, my heart !  
Tears could gush, save for something angerlike,  
That kindles in me. Oluph, where art thou ?

*Guldharald.* Tarry no more, but forward let us set  
And stir the natives of this forest's depth.  
Say, we divide : thou in the western route,



With half our men at arms, will start the prey ;  
 I with the lady and the left will here  
 Toward the sun go on. Thus in our toils  
 The game may be pent up.

*Adelstein.* With me, my sister.

*Alsifa.* With thee alone I go. I came but forth  
 In fear of sterner force, and I shall go  
 With whom my choice prescribes.

*Gulldharald.* It better seems—

*Alsifa.* I will not with you. Wrath begins to drown  
 All sadness, and my woes from their own sense  
 Mount to a madden'd passion. With thee, brother,  
 —Still brother, though unkindly—I will go.

*Adelstein.* Unkindly, sister? Have I ever rolled  
 A harmful thought to thee? Thou know'st me not.  
 True, she shall be, Gulldharald, my companion;  
 Else I not hunt to-day.

*Gulldharald.* —Now cursed be—

SIGURD, GUDRUDE, ROLFF, *come forward.*

*Sigurd.* (*With drawn sword.*) Turn thee, thou traitor! Take  
 thy treachery's meed.

[GULDHARALD *turning*, SIGURD *wounds him.*

*Gulldharald.* O damned villany! I am basely killed. (*Falls.*)

*Alsifa.* My father!

*Adelstein.* Hast thou slain him?

*Ist Huntsman.* He is slain.

At once let's plunge our weapons in his breast  
 Who killed him.

*Gudrude.* Hold! the traitor needs no motion  
 Of yours toward vengeance.

*Adelstein.* Murderer! thou shalt die  
 E'en for this bloody deed.

*Sigurd.* Boy! thou know'st not  
 That these were by that punished man suborned  
 To kill thee in the wood.

*Adelstein.* I know 'tis false.

*A Huntsman.* 'Tis true my lord.

*Gulldharald.* Thou villain.

*Ist Huntsman.* Speak the word,

Your slayer dies.—He answers not.

*Rolf.* E'en now

He is no more.

*Adelstein.* Speak, archers, did he plot

My death through you ?

*Another Huntsman.* I swear't, my lord, he did.

But I was loth in the action to partake.

*Adelstein.* O Thor, avenger !—I remember now ;

'Tis true, and I am rescued from a fate

Most base, most wretched. Gods ! what shall I now ?

*Alsifa.* Father, my savior ! (*Huntsmen bear off the body.*)

*Sigurd.* Now, thou revolted son, hearken my words.

Forth from his native walls, one all unused

To adverse angry fortunes, bowed in years,

And nigh enough unto life's vanishing time,

Your parent and preserver, did you spurn

Shelterless and unfurnished to the vast

Of this un pitying world.

*Alsifa.* 'Twas horrible !

*Sigurd.* Usurped his place ; and from her royal spouse

Purloined his daughter. How seeks he revenge ?

In your life's rescue from the treasonous scheme

Of a much-trusted partner, at the peril

Scarce past, of that existence 'gainst the which

Your bitter meditations wrought their most.

*Adelstein.* O how, how speak repentingly ? This life

Which thou had'st justly aimed at, but hast spared

To me most worthless is, me galled by guilt,

And lorn of every hope.

*Gudrude.* False, false, false sons !

*Adelstein.* Who is this man ?

*Sigurd.* My saviour and thine own.

A follower he is whose faithfulness

And wonderful devotion, hath no less

Than rescued thee and me ; a child could ne'er

Show love surpassing his.

*Gudrude.* Now know me better.

Behold in me Gudrude, that rash revolt

So worthy of thy hate. Forgive my boldness

That I dare ask thy pardon.



To test the rapture of my sympathies  
By heaping his soul's burden upon me,  
Lightening his plagues at heart.

*Guðrude.* This day, the Yule-feast  
Is celebrate; and in this night the king  
Must expiate in Thor's great temple, either  
Avenging or enduring, the dread action  
That crushed his father.

*Alsifa.* O it is; haste, haste.

*Sigurd.* Guðrude! and I not know thee! strange! thou'st won  
A dearer portion in my wronged affection  
By thy self-chastening, than can be summed.  
Nothing shall sever us.

*Adelstein.* O gods! and I?  
Farewell! all noble souls; your kindnesses  
Will ever load the memory, and all efforts,  
All ceaseless labor of a grateful heart,  
Must still prove idle. So, farewell for e'er!  
I leave ye.

*Sigurd.* But our welfare thy departure  
Requires not nor can suffer.

*Alsifa.* Brother, it were not kind such friends renewed  
To rob of thy dear presence.

*Adelstein.* Never more  
Shall you behold me; undeserving home  
Or genial harbor, through the stranger's land  
I will henceforward roam. A last farewell! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*The Palace.*

ASGILDA, HAKON.

*Asgilda.* The sun hath set; th' ambitious night bounds on  
Like some o'er-eager heir and weaves dominion  
Dark o'er the sadden'd void. A night, my son,  
Wherein that spirit which in life hath loomed  
Above and 'gainst our own must be down-trod  
And caved in death inglorious. E'en this night

Must give the end of Oluph.

*Hakon.* Who can see,  
Save who hath seen, or what can we discover,  
Save what hath vaulted past? Astonied, shocked,  
Surpriser Time oft finds us. In this night  
Oluph may die; but Hakon or Asgilda  
May be o'ertaken by that marvellous fate  
We know without adoring. Gods! My soul  
Hath a like-perishing feeling. I know not,—  
But 'twill be a remembered time this night.

*Asgilda.* We are empower'd to be fate ourself.  
Look at the resolute; where he dares aspire  
He dares the way thereto; he spurns those blocks  
Which puny chance hath pitched, and nature, fortune,  
And God's and man's endeavor challenges.  
Inly he works and mounts aloft serene.

*Hakon.* The mightiest heart beneath such weight must melt  
As that which mine oppresses. From this land  
I will take flight ere dawns another day.

*Asgilda.* Flight, flight? wherefore? you do not purpose it?

*Hakon.* Hear me, O hear me! list a dismal tale.  
Who, think you, slew his father?

*Asgilda.* Oluph only.

*Hakon.* He never.

*Asgilda.* Him the murderer every track  
And bloody vestige mark. Thorstein, most sage  
And stranger to deceit, rent the round veil  
That sheltered this dark deed; and gathering time  
Will speedily publish to the attent world  
From Einstein's lips, the truth. What would you more?

*Hakon.* Then perish faith in Thorstein, for the death  
Was thy son Hakon's work.

*Asgilda.* —Wild are his words;  
His timorous mind adread with far-drawn fears,  
Begins to shake.—Call back thy wandering sense,  
O Hakon, lest—

*Hakon.* You shall not 'scape to hear it.  
I wrought th' assassination which we charge  
Upon my father's first-born. When I learned  
The king would meet his son, I hurried on

False-habited and plunged into the haunts  
 Of desperate robbers whom, to kill the two  
 That journeyed after, I with ample sum  
 Did purchase; for that day my sire had spoken  
 Such words as unrequit I might not brook.  
 You, mother, you I know will censure not  
 What I declare.

*Asgilda.* Most horrible! but that  
 I knew that this attempt had fallen to earth  
 I could now curse thee. Odious treason! What?  
 By such vile means for such poor argument  
 To do unprofitable slaughter? Well  
 Its failure, else our gods could ne'er allow  
 Thy slumber long on earth.

*Hakon* —Not, not the skies  
 Do change their aspect as the mind of woman.—  
 For the attempt, it failed not; saw I not  
 His gashed and dabbled corse upon the altar?

*Asgilda.* How came it there?

*Hakon.* Save Einstein, none can tell.

*Asgilda.* And hast thou played the insincere with me?  
 With thee I lodge all knowledge of this breast,  
 But thou, tremendous stroke like this, hast kept  
 Deceitful from me.

*Hakon.* Leave we to dwell on thoughts  
 So homely and unworthy; and prepare  
 With me to fly or part.

*Asgilda.* Me fugitive?  
 Though nations mad with hate against me come  
 Wild as the surge, I am not seen to fly.

*Hakon.* We part.

*Asgilda.* What should'st thou fear?

*Hakon.* Einstein will speak  
 My guilt abroad.

*Asgilda.* How knoweth he thy crime?

*Hakon.* What way he learned I'm ignorant; but all  
 His words discover that he hath.

*Asgilda.* And why,  
 Believing this, hast thou not choked his voice?

*Hakon.* I sought, but vainly—ask me nothing more.

It cuts my soul most deep that you deny  
 To exculpate your son. Away! your're false  
 To the same lessons ye have taught. Away! [Exit HAKON  
*Asgilda.* Swift as the rush of lightning all my hopes  
 Desert me, and existence is a wreck  
 Fast-fixed for the sport of desolation.  
 Where caught my son this womanly desponding?  
 In such an hour irresolute? No peril  
 Could make this soul a recreant to the path  
 Outsketched. But he, a son of mine, to tame  
 Down to base cowardice! The worshipp'd star  
 And uncontrolled of all his age, I dreamed  
 Him to behold some day. 'Tis past.—So be it.  
 —Oluph must be sole criminal of this deed;  
 Thorstein declared it. 'Tis this night  
 Binds in and sets a term to his last moments;  
 And this is something.

*Re-enter HAKON.*

Are ye here again?

With better mind?

*Hakon.* My mother; ere day's break  
 The foe will scale the walls; greatly in risk  
 Will stand thy safety. Take thy flight with me,  
 Thy son.

*Asgilda.* He is not recognised my son  
 Who seeks t' escape a realm he strove to rule,  
 Who basely plots against his kingly father.

*Hakon.* While I do linger, more my heart becomes  
 A prey to anguish. Hours are each relays  
 Of the fast-nearing destiny, which rends  
 My hiding cloud. Fare you forever well!  
 Yet take this ample leaf; worn near the heart  
 It shields from mischief, for its nature is  
 Enchanted and so precious that no art  
 Can so protect as it. You hate me now;  
 But let it be the signal of thy son's  
 Swerveless affection.

*Asgilda.* Thankful, as a pledge  
 I do accept it. We shall meet again. [Exit ASGILDA

*Hakon.* Where?—There where she dare not reproach. The leaf  
 It will not trouble me. When all look dangers  
 Her sympathy is wanting.—What care I?  
 She sways mine every movement, and would check  
 Freedom of thought and act; success is ever  
 Her praise alone; while I am e'er compelled  
 To utter gratitude. I cannot brook it,  
 Energy crippled and constrained then most  
 When chiefly tasked. I never loved her, never;  
 Though always chained to show of due respect.  
 I must away,—yet hold. May Einstein be  
 In error and not know the true offender?  
 He may. I'll to the temple.  
 There mingled with the people, all unseen,  
 I may behold what happens into light.  
 If all prove insecure, I then and thence  
 Can make escape, nor any note my presence  
 Or sudden absence. Hope while life is to us!

[*Exit.*]

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LAST SCENE.—*Temple to Thor, lofty and of depth. In the  
 far end an Altar with Priests about.*

*Enter SKALDS.*

*Skalds.* The mighty of the land  
 Are sorrowful; they come  
 Solemn, with slow approach;  
 Heav'n's clouds upon them lower.

Why? Why?

*Priests.* Destruction's evil eye rolls glad  
 Upon this gloomy hour.  
 Vengeance is round about,  
 And makes the very spirit of the night  
 To tremble in his gloom.  
 I hear th' exult of doom  
 Who findeth harbors for th' uplifted death.

*Skalds.* The wandering streams have murmured,  
 The trees have tossed their melancholy arms,



'The surge beat mournfully;  
 While earth hath heaved sad groans,  
 And a voice from the wind leaped forth;  
 Portents and voice of death.  
 I tremble for I fear it.

*Priests.* Princes are pale and mute;  
 They come in sorrow,  
 Their soul is stricken  
 With the fear which is anguish.  
 Each tendril of their heart  
 Shakes roughly;  
 The blasts of guilt arise;  
 They tear the ripened joy,  
 The loves they tear asunder,  
 Nip the new-budding hope.  
 Awful is the return  
 Of out-dealt wickedness.

*Skalds.* The worst of guilt was theirs  
 Who wrought with weapons  
 No other than their tongues.  
 Th' high dwelling miserable,  
 Foul-touched with man's untruth,  
 Shall shine in goodness,  
 While falser hearts shall sicken.

*Enter OLUPH, ALSIFA, SIGURD, NOBLES, LADIES, GUARDS*

*Alsifa.* Rejoining thee, my prince, once more with thee  
 In union ne'er to perish, gently fall  
 In flakes eold memory, and along the heart  
 The throbs of painful fear endured succeed  
 More lightly. Sundered, all calamities  
 Meseemed too huge for the frail warrior, hope,  
 To undergo.

*Oluph.* No tyranny save death's,  
 No rash insensate folly shall have means  
 To sever us again. Thou art the ray  
 Before which shrink the shadows from my path,  
 Making themselves invisible.—Mine ever!

*Sigurd.* O melancholy time, when from his walls  
 Which stranger foeman batter with rude shock,

The king withdraws to stand against the eye  
 Of his uprisen brethren, and defend  
 His honor, the heart's rampart, from their breath  
 Assaulting foul, and from their treasonous hands  
 His menaced life! An hour, what full reproach  
 Can name? 'Twill ignominiously recoil  
 In future memory on its distainers.

*Oluph.* Remember we that soon our longings triumph,  
 And even here my sire avenged will be,  
 Be soon appeased the loud-complaining tones,  
 The outcries of his all-surviving goodness.

*Enter ASGILDA.*—*People gradually assemble in the after part  
 of the temple.*

*Asgilda.* Why tarries he whom Heaven and fate hath chosen  
 The champion of earth's virtue, who partook  
 The vision of that murder which assoiled  
 Our royalty of house, and gave our realm  
 A wound which rankles still? Why lingers Einstein?

*Sigurd.* He cometh; and no victim to his pyre  
 Drew nigh more shrinkingly.

*Alsifa.*

O heavy hour!

*Enter EINSTEIN.*

*Oluph.* Friends and my countrymen! to meet ye here,  
 And here to make ye 'count of how befell  
 The murder of your sovercign,—one whose life  
 Was nobleness itself, whose fair encounter  
 Did gently steal the courtesy and the heart,  
 And whose recorded name shall beckon men  
 T' approach in emulation as they can,—  
 It was my vow. Wherefore, I stand before ye;  
 Bend now your gaze on him, who hand in hand  
 Did with my parent journey; from his lips  
 Learn the fell wronger; then from me demand  
 Fulfilment of my other oath: this steel  
 In the high-guilty bosom to infix.

*Asgilda.* Einstein, thiy many seasoned frame, thine eye  
 Bencath the furrowed front deep sunken, all  
 Time's melancholy tokens—many hours

To hope forbid thee. O beware to stain  
 Thy name with falsehood and o'erload thy soul  
 In its last flight. The gods themselves this night  
 Are watchful on their lofty seats to catch  
 What words this fane shall listen. So, beware.

*Oluph.* Aged companion, in a bold high tone  
 Give us to know the story of that day,  
 The fountain of our woes.

(*THORSTEIN issues from the crowd.*)

*Thorstein.* Silence! All hearken that I may unfold  
 Secrets of high import, then go my way.  
 I know who is the guilty; he came forth  
 From out the palace; with a reckless band  
 Of freebooters, the dwellers of the wold,  
 He bargained for the slaughter of your king.  
 Of princely birth he is; Hakon his name.  
 Behold him there; his only is the guilt.

[*Exit THORSTEIN.*

(*HAKON is led forward.*)

*Oluph.* Were ye assailed by robbers?

*Einstein.*

King, we were.

*Oluph.* O Thor! put down the rising terror here;  
 Banish the fell suspicion in my soul.

*Asgilda.* False is the charge; Prince Hakon guiltless is.  
 By Heaven! this well may be believed some scheme  
 Which wicked men and high in power do use  
 For their escape. I cry on man and God,  
 To shield the innocent from wolfish souls.  
 My Hakon? wo be to the evil mind!

*Hakon.* Tell me, thou hoar-topped man, was the king slain  
 By such as Thorstein spake me to have bribed?

*Oluph.* Why art thou silent? wake thy voice in answer.

*Einstein.* Is 't not enough that one be found to bear  
 The proof of guilt? A accomplice he had none.

*Sigurd.* This answers. Go no further. By his son,  
 His younger, hath our noble king been killed.  
 Rent are the folds that haply clothed this crime  
 And Hakon found beneath. Enough. Oh, more.

*Asgilda.* Call ye this justice? this your proof? Is yet  
 The heir himself released from man's suspicion?

*Oluph.* I charge ye, Einstein, to destroy the veil

That buries from our mind yon fatal day.  
 Tell us, from morn till night the sad adventure  
 Of the dear sire; the glorious gush of life  
 When issuing from the gates a son to meet  
 Give us to trace unto the dark abyss  
 Of death precipitous: and truly speak.

*Einstein.* The air was cheerful, and our sunny path  
 We trod in silent, sweet content. Behold!  
 The road plunged into defiles; wary feet  
 Move slowly and the sun rode high. The master  
 Bade me to give the solitary place  
 A voice. The rocks and hills were glad around;  
 Seemed as the spirits of our forefathers,  
 Rejoiced to swell the music which their halls  
 Exulted once to echo. On. I sang  
 The torrent and the hill, and the loud tongue  
 Of thunders dancing on the mountain's brow,  
 The winds that ride abroad in heedless pride,  
 The night serenely moving thronged with stars,  
 The loving parent day, the skies, the heav'ns,  
 The gods. We wended thus our route till heights  
 Had parted from us, and the forest's shades  
 Bent o'er us. Then, when day was dying, rushed  
 With startling yell from out a fav'ring cove  
 The robber-crew. At once their prisoners,  
 They dragged us to their lairs.

*Oluph.* Powers of Heaven!

An infant death is struggling in my heart.

*Einstein.* The night-fire blazed; with silence they unbound us  
 And moved to our destruction. But their hands  
 Fell from the king revealed, nor would they slay.  
 They whispered and glanced sidelong, fearing or  
 To kill or liberate. But there came one  
 With forces, who o'erpowered king and robber,  
 Making one general slaughter. I escaped.

*Oluph.* —The one dread pang hath vaulted through this frame,  
 And horror now is quiet.—List, ye people:  
 Behold me—me, my father's murderer!  
 —My parent charged me in my homeward march  
 To fall upon and sweep from land and life

These wasters of the soil. Thrice in that day  
I left for this the army, and three bands  
Destroyed of those dire poisons to the state.  
The night again down to their haunts I went ;  
Surprised this herd. Thick was the midnight dark,  
And the dim form of kneeling age received  
My brand. Whose was that form ?

*Einstein.* Thy father's 'twas.

*Alsifa.* Most miserable error !

*Asgilda.* Hideous crime !

Did I not say 't? Oluph the parricide !

*Oluph.* My father didst thou merit this? Great gods!  
Could ye not wreak a less annihilation?  
Nor fix some paler guilt upon my heart?  
O blinded rashness! but this life atones.

*Asgilda.* Ha! hath our king foredone his aged parent,  
One who more loved him than the sway of realms?  
Ingrate! the deed palsies my very thoughts.  
Hoped he to shake conviction and the doom  
Upon my son? him of the princely soul?  
Rejoice! the mask is fallen: Expiation  
From yonder altar screams for his destruction!

*Alsifa.* Peace, woman! cease to ply th' infected tongue  
Which is the guilty? Which hath wrought the crime?  
With base abhorrent covenant thy son  
Did buy his father's murder. Darest thou then,—  
Hast thou the wicked hardihood to taunt  
The king e'en in his hour of misery,  
With lamentable error as a crime?  
Shame to thy wild and evil heart, fierce woman!

*Asgilda.* Could'st thou, spouse of the blood-soiled king,  
prolong  
One hour his moments, thou might'st scoff less vainly.  
—A sudden faintness moves along my heart,  
A most unearthly sickness.—King, remember,  
This life is due.

*Alsifa.* His life? What meaneth this?

*Oluph.* Did I not make an oath, by all the circle  
Of the high gods, to punish with this steel  
Th' assassin of the king? And shall I fail?

*Alsifa.* No, no; let Hakon suffer who alone  
Did purpose ill. Thou guiltless art, my husband.

*Asgilda.* Hakon to perish for the crime of Oluph?  
Dictate of tyranny! more fell and fearful  
Than the foul murder to be yet avenged.

*Sigurd.* Say, ye assembled, shall this traitor live,  
Who did attempt, by the most damning means,  
His parent's death? Shall justice be dishonored  
In his detested living? Let the good  
Haste then to the sepulchral rest; to live  
Where he exists, is suffering beyond death's.

*Noble.* Death! let him die!

*People.* Revenge for the foul murder!

*Sigurd.* Secure him, guards, and watch him well; the  
faithless!

*Asgilda.* I have no feeling like to life: my heart  
Is down unutterably. I love thee, Hakon:  
—I can no more.

*Hakon.* The leaf.

*Asgilda.* The leaf! the leaf!  
My son hath murdered me! Where are the gods?

(*She swoons, and ladies bear her out.*)

*Hakon.* Regard her not. I know full well the poison;  
'Tis subtle, fleet and potent. She is lost;  
Take ye no care of her.

*Oluph.* Convey him hence! that nothing of such dark  
And vicious thoughtwork may behold of me  
The final action.

[*HAKON is led out.*]

O ill-fortuned sire,  
Terrible was thy fate! no hand to give,  
Save mine, the cursed stroke. Perhaps thy soul  
Leaped in its seat, trustful that I were come  
To break thy villanous bonds.

(*A Soldier enters and whispers SIGURD.*)

*Sigurd.* My lord, my lord,  
The foe hath stormed successfully the walls,  
And throng the very palace.

*Oluph.* It is well.  
A noble prince and virtuous, unexcelled  
By any in his rights to Norway's rule,

Erick, I choose mine heir.

*Alsifa.* And can'st thou die?

*Sigurd.* Allow not death this triumph now; some hour  
When solemn quiet reigns, were far more fitting  
Than this most wrathful and afflicted time.

*Alsifa.* Oluph, and asks it then so slight a pang  
With me to part? Die then. And shall I live,  
Live in the desert of this world, and hunger  
For that which but in memory existeth,  
Thy love? Thy love—a thing of memory! Never.

*Sigurd.* Death's character creeps o'er me. Long can I  
Not linger in this place of woes, my child.  
Abide then, else I sink into the tomb  
Wild in my crazing loneliness. Stay with me.

*Oluph.* Ye! before whom I hasten now to stand;  
Thou! whom with guilty rashness, yet in love  
Unalterable, I did cause to perish;  
Benevolent deities and cherished parent:  
Be this deep agony of me accept  
As sacrifice, and let th' uplifted steel

(*ALSIFA kneels in speechless supplication.*)

Descending, reconciliation win, and win  
Propitiation in ye, that no greeting  
Await me, lightning-eyed and breathing ire  
'Gainst me so stricken deeply; mine own bosom  
Is all your scourges multiplied; spare, spare me!

(*He stabs himself and falls.*)

*Sigurd.* O noble youth, farewell! and may thy death  
Content th' avenging rulers.

*Oluph.* *Alsifa!*

My wife! rememb'ring thee, I die. Live happy. [*Dies.*]

*Alsifa.* I weep no more. With subdued spirit, with smiles  
I wait the welcome death. May it not tarry!

CURTAIN FALLS.











